

THE ḤIJĀB.
ITS ORIGIN AND DEVELOPMENT FROM THE
PRE-ISLAMIC PERIOD
TO THE END OF THE Umayyad Period

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- Pl. XLIII Moses being rescued from the water by the Pharaoh's daughter; wall painting from Dura-Europos (c. 250 AD).
Damascus, National Museum
- Pl. XLIV Camels carrying goods and covered with richly decorated rugs; wall painting decorating the arch in the Women's Quarter, Qusayr 'Amra, Jordan (early 8th Century AD).
[source: Almagro, et al., op.cit., Pl. XXVIII]

A B S T R A C T

The thesis examines the history and the development¹ of the hijāb from pre-Islamic times up to the end of the 'Umayyad period, i.e. until 132 AH/AD 750. Geographically it covers the area between Syria and the Hejaz.

In the first chapter the word hijāb is linguistically examined, in particular its occurrence and interpretation in the Holy Qur'ān. In the second part of this chapter the political and social life during the Prophet's life time is scrutinised, followed by an extensive study of two Suras, namely the Aḥzāb Sura and the Nūr Sura in which the status of the Prophet's wives is determined. They clarify the radical difference in the interpretation and application of the hijāb between the Prophet's wives and those of ordinary Muslim women.

In the second chapter the occurrence of the hijāb is examined in the artistic appearance in pre-Islamic Mesopotamia, Persia and Syria. Particular attention is paid to the use of the hijāb among the Hebrews and the Arabs of pre-Islamic Arabia. It clearly reveals that the hijāb was known to the Arabs long before the advent¹ of Islam.

In the third chapter the introduction and development of the hijāb is examined from the Prophet's time up to the end of the 'Umayyad period through available written sources and archaeological evidence.

Finally, in the fourth chapter the various items of the hijāb are analysed and examined, followed by conclusions and a full bibliography.

A C K N O W L E D G E M E N T S

I wish to express my most sincere gratitude to all those who helped me in a variety of ways during the writing of this thesis. Apart from my supervisor, Dr Geza Fehervari, the script has been carefully read by Professor John Wansbrough who has made a number of valuable suggestions. It was also seen by Dr Robin Ostle, who made some vital comments and observations, particularly about the linguistic aspects of this work. I wish to express my thanks to both of them for their help and assistance. I also owe a lot of gratitude to my colleague, Dr Nabil Safwat, who gave me much encouragement during the course of my study.

Finally, there is one important person to whom I owe a great deal, my husband Dr Qais, without whose help and encouragement I would have never been able to begin, to pursue, let alone to finish this study. He not only financed my course, but together with my children, Yasmin and Dina, they were tolerant and understanding and were willing to accept the absence of a wife and mother throughout my studies.

THE GRACE OF ALLAH HAS BEEN EVER PRESENT IN THE TIME OF NEED

NOTES ON TRANSLITERATION

The transliteration of Arabic names and words follows the system that is adopted by the Encyclopaedia of Islam with the following exceptions.

for jim rendered as j

for qaf rendered as q

and

double letters are not underlined

* * * *

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

Abbreviated words and titles of some of the most quoted works

b. Ibn, son of

d. died

Dozy, Sup. aux Dict. = Dozy, Reinhart, Supplement aux Dictionnaires Arabes, Leiden (1881). Arabic tr. by al-Nu^ʿaimī, Takmilat al-Sila, 5 vols., Baghdad (no date).

E.B. Encyclopaedia Britannica, 15th edition, U.S.A. (1985), vol. V.

E.I. Encyclopaedia of Islam, New Edition prepared under the patronage of the International Union of Academies, Leiden (1979).

E.M.A. Creswell, K.A.C., Early Muslim Architecture - 'Umayyads, Early 'Abbāsids and Tulūnids, 2 vols., Oxford (1934-40), reprinted New York (1987).

E.W.A. Encyclopaedia of World Art, England (1961), "Costumes" (Byzantine and Iran) by W. Staude, Vol. IV, pp. 515 ff.

Fig. Figure

Girshman, Iran = Girshman, Roman, Iran, Parthians and Sassanians, transl. by S. Gilbert and J. Emmons, Thames and Hudson, London (1964).

The Holy Qur'ān = The numbers used in Qur'anic quotations comply with the standard English translation of Muhammad Yusuf Ali, The Holy Qur'ān, Text and Commentary, Lahore (1934 and 1951) reprinted Qatar National Press (no date).

Ibn Ḥanbal = Aḥmad Ibn Muḥammad Ibn Ḥanbal, Musnad Ibn Ḥanbal, 6 vols., Cairo, (1306 AH).

Ibn Hishām = Abū Muḥammad 'Abd al-Mālik Ibn Muḥammad Ibn Hishām, Sirat Ibn Hishām, ed. Taha 'Abd al-Ra'ūf, al-Azhar Press, tr. by A. Guillaume, The Life of Muḥammad, Oxford (1924).

Ibn Ishāq = Muḥammad Ibn Ishāq, Sirat Ibn Ishāq al-Musammah bi Kitāb al-Mubtada' wa al-Ma'ad wa al-Maghāzī, "A Life of the Prophet Muḥammad", ed. M. Ḥamid Allah, Rabat (1976).

Ibn Kathīr, Tafsīr = al-Ḥāfiẓ 'Imād al-Dīn Abul-Fida' Ismā'īl Ibn 'Umar Ibn Kathīr Qarashī, Tafsīr al-Qur'ān, 10 vols., Cairo (1960).

Ibn Khaldūn, Muqaddimah = Ibn Khaldūn, Muqaddimat Ibn Khaldūn, 3 vols., tr. by Franz Rosenthal, The Muqaddimah, New York (1958).

- Ibn Māja = Abū 'Abdullah Muḥammad bin Yazīd al-Qizwīnī, Sunan Ibn Māja, 2 vols., ed. Muhammad Fou'ād al-Halabī, (1952).
- Ibn Manẓūr, Lisān al-'Arab = Abū al-Faḍl Jamāl al-Dīn Muḥammad Ibn Makrām Ibn Manẓūr, Lisān al-'Arab, 15 vols., Beirut (1374 AH).
- Ibn Rushd = Muḥammad Ibn Aḥmad Ibn Rushd, Muqaddimat Ibn Rushd, Dār Ṣādir, Beirut (no date).
- Ibn Sa' d = Muḥammad Ibn Sa'īd Ibn Sa' d, Kitāb al-Ṭabaqāt al-Kubra, Ṭabaqāt Ibn Sa' d, Beirut (1957) and Leiden (1959).
- al-Jawharī = Ismā'īl Ibn Ḥammād al-Jawharī, Tāj al-Lughā wa Ṣaḥīḥ al-'Arabia (also known as Ṣaḥīḥ al-Lughā), Cairo (1377 AH).
- Lane, Lexicon = Lane, E.W., Arabic-English Lexicon, 2 vols., London (1863).
- Lyall, Mufaḍḍaliyyāt = Lyall, C.J., The Mufaḍḍaliyyāt, "Anthology of Ancient Arabian Odes", compiled by al-Mufaḍḍal Ibn Muḥammad, 2 vols., Arabic-English, Oxford (1921).
- al-Mawdūdī, Purdah = Abū al-A'la al-Mawdūdī, Purdah and the Status of Women in Islam, London (1931 and 1939). Arabic tr. by al-Ash'arī, al-Hijāb, Damascus (1976) and Cairo (1981).
- Muslim, Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim = Abū al-Ḥusain Ibn al-Ḥajjāj Muslim, Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim, Cairo, Bulaq (1290 AH).
- al-Nasā'iy = Abū 'Abd al-Raḥman Aḥmad 'Alī al-Nasā'iy, Sunan al-Nasā'iy, Cairo, Bulaq (1312 AH).
- Pl. Plate
- Al-Qurṭubī, Iafsīr al-Qurṭubī = Abū 'Abd Allāh Muḥammad Ibn Aḥmad al-Anṣārī al-Qurṭubī, al-Jāmi' lī Ahkām al-Qur'ān, Cairo (1954).
- al-Ṭabarī, Annales = Abū Ja'far Muḥammad Ibn Jarīr, known as al-Ṭabarī, Tārīkh al-Rusul wal Mulūk ("Annales"), ed. by M.J. de Goege, 13 vols., Brill, Leiden (1879-1901).
- al-Zāhidī = Muḥammad Murtaḍa al-Zāhidī, Tāj al-'Arūs min Jawāhir al-Qāmūs, 10 vols., Cairo (1306) and Beirut (1966).
- al-Zamakhshārī = Muḥammad Ibn 'Umar al-Zamakhshārī, al-Kashaf, "Zamakhshārī's Commentary on the Qur'ān", Cairo (1925).

INTRODUCTION

PREFACE

Hijāb has played and is still playing a dominant role in the lives of Muslim women. It is still practised in traditional societies, particularly in Arabia. Its use today is a continuation of its use in history, and forms part of Muslim history and culture all over the world.

Today, hijāb is generally defined as a veil which covers the head, normally concealing the hair or lower part of the face, although Muslim interpretation varies in the sense that hijāb may completely hide a woman's countenance. The variety of head coverings on Muslim women today demonstrates the variety of traditions. Moreover, it has become normal to see veiled women in the Western world, emphasising that Muslim women are retaining a style of hijāb which covers the hair while revealing the face - closely resembling a nun's habit.

Until a few decades ago, and still in traditional societies, most Arab women wore hijāb as a veil completely covering the face or only revealing the eyes. A closer look at hijāb shows that it consists of several parts, each serving a different purpose, with different names. Indeed, as a garment, hijab is a

collection of headgear, cloaks, mantles, wrappers, shawls and masks. All have different names and colours throughout the Arab and Muslim world.

First there is the hijāb which covers the whole body and sometimes the face as well. It is a cloak, placed over a veil, known by different names in different Arab countries. In Iraq and Kuwait it is the ‘abāya; in Saudi Arabia and the Gulf states daffa, and milfa; milāya in Egypt; jallāba in Morocco; hāyak and burnus in North Africa. Chādūr, īzār, charchaf, burqu’, or purda, are various other names to be found in other Muslim countries, such as Iran and Afghanistan. There is a similar range of names for headgear. It is niqāb and tarḥa in Egypt, Syria and Saudi Arabia; khimār, shayla, and pūshyya in Iraq and Gulf states; yashmak in Turkey; niqāb in Iran; burqu’ in Afghanistan and Muslim India. As for colours, cloaks are generally plain black, although women in North Africa still use the white jallāba; the Turkish yashmak also used to be white. Brown and dark patterned cloaks are usually found only in non-Arab Muslim countries. Some are decorated with silver coins (especially among the Bedouin of the Sinai Peninsula). The batūla, a mask worn today among women of the Gulf coast, is made of stiff fabric and resembles an eagle's beak. Some, such as those worn in Salala in Oman and in Yemen, are richly embroidered.

On the subject of seclusion of women, some Arabs still keep their women completely veiled and segregated in private palaces surrounded only by other women - either freinds or relatives. Journeys are undertaken in black limousines with closely drawn curtains. A woman is known as hurma, meaning "prohibited" (plural, harim 1). On marriage, a woman loses her identity and even her name. She is never known by her first name, but usually after her son's first name. For example, 'Umm Áḥmed, "mother of Áḥmed"(2). No picture or photographs are needed for a woman's identification papers, such as passports. They are often protected by guards, servants and high walls. In non-Arabian Muslim countries they move freely beneath their tent-like cloaks, known as chādūr or purda, which enable women to go out while maintaining their seclusion (3).

There is a tendency, either among the women themselves or among their families and their guardians, to link this seclusion to religion.

The Meaning of the Word Hijāb

The word hijāb is a term used today to mean "veil". Why, therefore, use this word as the topic of this study?

The word hijāb which is defined as sitr(4) meaning to cover, or to separate by a curtain is derived from the Qur'anic verses:

"Ask them from behind hijāb" and
"(Mary) took from them hijāb" (5).

In both verses, the word hijāb describes a situation involving exceptional women. The first verse refers to the Prophet's wives, the second is addressed to the Virgin Mary. Both verses refer to an ancient custom, one which asks women to draw a curtain between them and other people, to live in separate quarters reserved for the family and female friends, and to wear certain clothes which enable them to maintain their seclusion while they are out of doors. It also distinguishes them from ordinary women.

Hijāb will therefore be examined artistically as an item of costume, the wearing of which is backed by religious approval. In this study it will also be treated historically as a social practice reflecting the position of women in Islam. Regardless of the Islamic ideology behind hijāb, or the Muslim attitude towards it, this study will deal with the existence of the subject in the past as well as in the present, throughout the Arab and Muslim world.

Historically, the segregation of the sexes was regarded as a symbol of prosperity, a means of distinguishing the wives of landowners from those of the peasant labour class (6). It

originated most probably in agricultural communities containing both land- and cattle-owners. In such societies women were regarded as less productive economically than men. An agricultural society with an adequate supply of male labour permits the restriction of women at home. Within a tribal society, such as the Prophet's tribe (7), Quraish women were regarded as representing the honour of the tribe, to be protected by every means. Female chastity is divine because it is the symbol of their purity and power. Both attitudes were widely observed in Arabia before Islam. The tribal aristocracy survived in Syria, where the Umayyads demonstrated a revival of Quraish power and wealth.

Although the Old Testament mentions the veil as far back as the nineteenth century BC (8), there is still considerable uncertainty about the origin of hijāb. The existing evidence indicates that in all parts of the ancient Near East, hijāb was observed more strictly by the upper classes who could afford the necessary servants and quarters for their women.

Harīm

It is difficult to state exactly how long there have been harīms. The Mesopotamian records (9), dating from the middle of the third millenium BC, mention the houses and gardens of the

harim - the "hidden places" of the "unapproachables". Only at a much later date, however, - the second half of the second millenium BC - is information available about life in the royal harim. Several rulers issued instructions for their officials concerning palace communities and women's duties in the palace. Excluding the Hittite(10)rulers, it was principally the Assyrian kings of the fourteenth-eleventh centuries BC whose reigns are distinguished by the invention of the rules and decrees 11 restricting women's appearance. We do not know whether they were developing an earlier prototype(12).

The women in their harims were secluded from the entire world in a building of their own inside the palace. Among the women were the concubines, as well as numerous maids, female slaves and eunuchs who had to serve and entertain the women. Their main occupations were embroidering royal garments, spinning and weaving and plaiting baskets. Playing music, singing and dancing were also essential. They used to accompany the king or the lord when he went hunting. Also they slept during the day in order to be fresh for the night. In the ninth century BC, however, officials and their wives were living together at court of the Viceroy of Guzana (Tel Halaf). Earlier, in the fourteenth century BC(13), the Hittites reported that a man had to pay with his life for having looked indecently at one of the women in the palace(14).

In Persia, at the court in Susa (5th century BC), the king chose his wife from among several beautiful maidens specially arrayed for his pleasure (15), and the new wife was put in the custody of the king's chamberlain who guarded the harīm which was called anderun (16). The Assyrians most probably established hijāb regulations in restricting the appearance of women by law in the seventh century BC.

This study will therefore examine the word hijāb and its roots in the art of literature in the pre- and post-Islamic period. The historical roots of hijāb probably go back as far as the third millenium BC. To investigate its Islamic origins, we will cover the early Islamic period from the birth of Islam to the end of the Umayyad period within Syria and the Hijaz. We shall also return to the Arabs of the Jahiliya period, and to those civilisations in touch with Arabia before Islam, such as the Persian, Assyrian and Hebrew.

Hypothesis

Having established that the practise of hijāb was common before Islam, it is interesting to base the hypothesis of this study on the following questions: Why has it survived, why did it flourish after the emergence of Islam, and what was it like at the time of the Prophet? It is also important to see why certain people within the Muslim world - not only Arabs - still maintain hijāb today.

The core of this study is devoted to the following:
the origins of hijāb in the Near East; how and when the concept of hijāb was introduced into Islam; the forms of hijāb practised at the time of the Prophet; and hijāb definitions and their Qur'anic, historical and literary interpretations upto the end of the 'Umayyad period. A thorough study of the literary, historical and religious sources is important due to the lack of archaeological evidence from the Prophet's time.

The first chapter examines the various renderings and usages of the word hijāb in Arabic lexicology texts. It is agreed that hijāb is introduced in the Qur'an. It is therefore essential to investigate relevant verses, namely verses 31 and 59 from the Ahzāb Sūra and verse 60 from the Nūr Sūra.

The information is based on interpretations of the Qur'an (including verses dealing indirectly as well as directly with hijāb), certain Hadīth and the Sunna version determining and defining hijāb not only as a garment, but as a code of manners and women's seclusion. We will focus on codes of hijāb such as zīna, tabarruj, jilbāb and khimār.

This chapter also demonstrates that there was a radical difference in the application of hijāb among the Prophet's wives and among other Muslim women. Both as garment and as a way of life, the definition of hijāb in the Suras was addressed to the Prophet's wives only.

The main sources for this chapter, apart from the Holy Qur'an, are the famous lexicological texts such as Siḥāḥ al-Lughā, Lisān al-ʿArab and others, as well as early quotations from the Ḥadīth, and such biographies of the Prophet as that of 'Ibn Sa'd, the Musnad of Abū Dāwūd and others. Such commentators on the Qur'ān as 'Ibn Kathīr and others contributed much of the information in this chapter. Muslim historians have left generous descriptions of the domestic life of the Prophet, giving us a vivid image of ḥijāb in these early years.

The second chapter is devoted to an examination of the art and literature of the pre-Islamic period. Because of the dearth of illustrations from the early years of Islam, we must look at neighbouring civilisations contemporary with the Prophet, or a little earlier, and examine references to ḥijāb from the Jāhiliyya poets.

Arabia at the time of the birth of Islam knew several forms of ḥijāb, illustrations of which (of great importance to this study) are to be found in the Jahiliyya poets as well as in Assyrian, Palmyrene and Hatran reliefs. Central to this study is the idea demonstrated in these illustrations, that the Arabs had their own ḥijāb and it was they who introduced it to Islam.

Arabic terms and words of ḥijāb items are also examined in this chapter, which also investigates early indications of ḥijāb in Mesopotamian arts such as turbans, cloaks, shawls, mantles

and veils, not forgetting their definition in Assyrian, Persian and Hebrew arts.

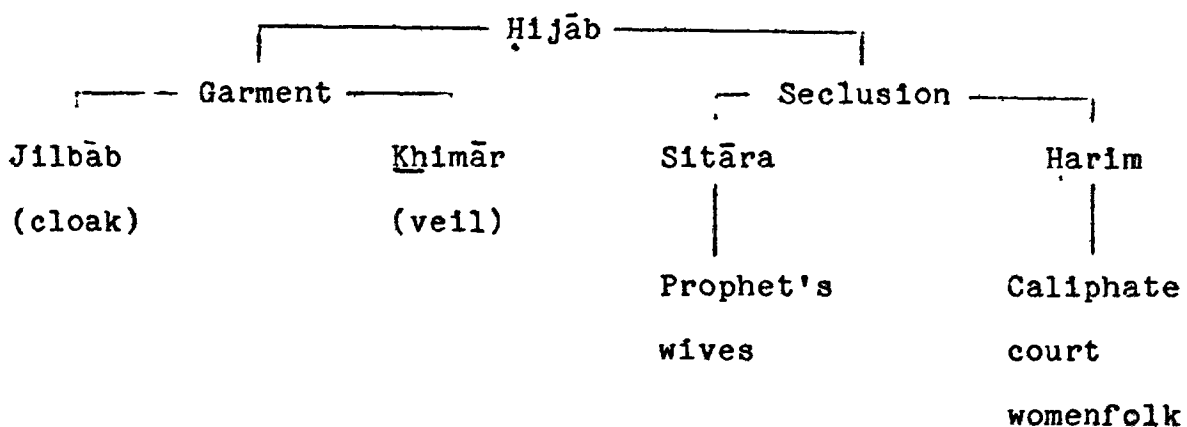
The third chapter describes the characteristics of hijāb from the early Islamic period until the end of the 'mayyad period. Information is based on evidence of the existence of hijāb in Arabia shortly before the birth of Islam, descriptions of hijāb items, and measurements in the Hadith.

In the first section of this chapter we will see how there is little difference between hijab of the Jahiliya period and that of early Islam, although a few restrictions began to be applied along Islamic lines. Also, how there was no particular garment other than an ordinary decent dress known as dir, khimār and ridā'. The Ḥadīth and Sunna contain vital information about how these garments were worn, their fabrics, as well as a number of words to describe ways of wearing different items of hijāb.

The study will prove that the simplicity of hijāb and other aspects of life were typical of the Rāshidūn period. This chapter will present evidence of the Umayyad style of hijāb, such as using certain colours and fabrics, also how the turban came under local influence, the fashion of the Umayyad court ladies, and how the black khimār, which was not prevalent in the Hijāz, extended its area at this period too. We will also show that Makka, Madīna and Damascus enjoyed a considerably free life.

The illustrations of Qusayr 'Amra provide this chapter with crucial information of the 'Umayyad court life. Comparing this information with those of Palmyra, enable us to draw a picture of the style, fashion and manners of using hijāb.

The fourth chapter categorises the hijāb definitions according to the Aḥzāb and the Nūr Sūras. They are divided into two parts: one under garments, and another under seclusion. The first category - garments - is also divided into two parts, one is the jilbāb (cloak), and the other is the khimār (veil). The second category will be under sitāra (curtain), which became the symbol of the women's seclusion in quarters and houses, which were termed the ḥarīm. The following sketch shows the hijāb category and how this word became the equivalent word for all the definitions listed in this sketch:



The chapter is divided into three sections, as follows:
(1) Jilbāb (cloak); (2) Khimār (veil); and (3) Sitāra (curtain). Each section will investigate the term and its definition, significance and interpretation in reference to social life from the time of the Prophet, up to the end of the 'Umayyad period. The main sources will be the wall paintings of Qusayr 'Amra, Khirbat al-Mafjar and Qasr al-Hayr, confronted with the literary sources of that period.

The three sections of this chapter will examine in detail the words jilbāb, khimār and sitāra in the relevant Qur'ānic verses. These terms will also be linguistically examined, especially their interpretations as garments and seclusion in Ḥadīth and Sunna sources.

This chapter will study the history of jilbāb, khimār and sitāra in the art and literature of the pre-Islamic period. We will trace their presence from the Jāhiliya period up to the end of the 'Umayyads.

NOTES TO INTRODUCTION

- (1) Harīm f. pl. of hurma. Haram (m.) is an Arabic word meaning "forbidden, prohibited or sacred". Applied to sacred areas and the holy cities Makka, Madina and Jerusalem. Then applied to female appartments which are forbidden to strangers. Harīm collectively used to refer to women. Parrinder, Geofry, A Dictionary of Non-Christian Religions, London (1970), p. 117; "Harīm", E. B., p. 703; "harem", Webster's Dictionary.
- (2) Saiyyd, 'Adawīya, adviser to the National Center for Social and Criminal Research in his Academic Paper sent to Laffin, John, Known the Middle East, Gloucester (1985), p. 176; al- 'Aasiy, Layla Hanum Ali, Egyptian Women (Arabic), Asiyūt, Egypt (1984), pp. 48-55.
- (3) Yarwood, Doreen, Encyclopaedia of World Costume, London (1978), p. 256; Scarce, Jennifer, "The Development of Women's Veils in Persian and Afghanistan", Costume, (1975) Vol. 9, pp. 4-14.
- (4) The Holy Qur'ān, Sūra 33, al-Ahzāb, verse 53.
- (5) *ibid*, Sūra 19, (Mary), verse 17.
- (6) Poserup, Ester, Women's Role in Economic and Development, London (1972), p. 48.
- (7) Levy, Reuben, The Social Structure of Islam, Cambridge (1954), pp. 122-30.
- (8) When Rebekkah chose a wife for Isaac, her servant told her that Isaac is coming, "....therefore she took a veil and covered herself". Old Testament, Genesis 24:66.
- (9) Seibert, Ilse, Women in the Ancient Near East, ed. Leipzig (1974), p. 41.
- (10) Schuler, E. von, "Hethitische Dienstanweisungen für höhere Hof und Staatsbeamte", Archiv für Orientalienwissenschaften, Graz (1957), p. 10.
- (11) "The Assyrians in the 7th Century BC (Middle Assyrian Period), issued decrees in the law which implemented the hijab, the veiling of noble Assyrian ladies in public". Sulayman, 'Amir, Iraq in the History (Arabic), Baghdad (1983), p. 193; Olmstead, A. T., History of Assyria, London (1923), p. 299.

- 4
- (12) Weidner, E., "Hof und Harems Erlasse Assyrischer Könige aus dem 2. Jahrtausend", Chronicle Archiv für Orientalforschungen, No. 17 (1955-56), p. 257.
- (13) Labat, R., "Assyrien und seine Nachbarlännder", Fischer's Weltgeschichte, vol. 4, Hamburg (1957), p. 42.
- (14) The Hittite great King Shuppiluliumu drew his brother-in-law's attention to his court private life, especially "to guard his eyes with palace women", Weidner, E., op. cit., p. 293; Akurgal, Ekrem, The Art of Hittites, London (1962), p. 62.
- (15) Old Testament, Book of Esther, 12-14.
- (16) EB, p. 703. Vol V P

C H A P T E R I

THE HIJĀB FROM LITERARY AND HISTORICAL SOURCES

1. LINGUISTIC EXAMINATION

A) The Hijāb from the Qur'ān and Sunna Sources

1. The Word Hijāb in Classical Lexicons
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2. HISTORICAL STUDY

A) The Status of the Prophet's Wives

B) The Start of the Hijāb and the Revelation of the Aḥzāb and the Nūr Sūras

C) The Historical Evidence of the Prophet's Wives' Hijāb

C H A P T E R I

THE HIJĀB FROM LITERARY AND HISTORICAL SOURCES

This chapter examines the early Islamic sources of hijāb. It is divided into two parts: the first is a linguistic examination, looking at the word from a religious viewpoint by examining the occurrence of the word in the Qur'ān and in the Ḥadīth; the second is a historical examination to find the introduction of the hijāb in Islam.

1. LINGUISTIC EXAMINATION

A) The Hijāb from the Qur'ān and Sunna Sources

1) The Word Hijāb in Classical Lexicons

Hijāb is the noun from the derivation ḥa-ja-ba. Various meanings have been given to this in the books of lexicology. Mainly it is to "prevent", "seclude" and "cover". Linguistically(1), it has the following meanings:

"He, she or it, prevented, hindered or precluded; him, her or it from entering, seeing or communicating by means of hijāb which could be ḥājib (person), door, barrier, clothes, such as jilbāb and khimār (garments) or sitāra (curtains)".

Islamic law defines hijāb to mean "preclude"(2) as "the brothers of a deceased are yab-jī-būn (precluded) the mother from receiving a third of the inheritance".

Hijāb has a spiritual meaning as in bayt al-hijāb, an amulet or encased written charm bound to the shoulder to ward off any evil or bad luck. Similarly, the phrase, "He has prayers that rend the hijāb", also, "Looking over the hijāb".(3)

Hijāb(4) is a title given to the doorkeeper and chamberlain of the ruler. The hijāba(5) was the assignment given to the Prophet's grandfather 'Abd al-Muṭalib, to keep the golden lock and key of the Ka'ba, long before the advent of Islam.

Mahjūba(6)(f) is the fully covered woman. Mahjūb(m) is a man concealed by a curtain or secluded in a chamber.

Hijāban mastūra(7) is a hidden barrier or invisible screen. Hijāb is equivalent to sitr(8) or sitāra. Mastūra is an adjective describing the covered, veiled, hidden, concealed, protected or guarded person or things(9). Sitūr and 'astār are the plurals of the sitr and sitāra(10), which means the cloth covering/curtain such as the 'astār of the Ka'ba. Both hijāb and sitr have no equivalent in Hebrew or Aramaic. An Arabic variation for both is kiswa, which

is equivalent to kisut (Hebrew) and kisutu (Assyrian)(11). Chādūr is the Persian equivalent to the Arabic sitūr. Most probably it is a variation of it. Both chādūr and curtains called purda which is equivalent to hijāb(12).

2) The Word Hijāb in the Qur'ān

The aim of this section is to discover why hijāb was adopted to mean women's veils and seclusion. Accordingly, we will trace the occurrence of this word in the Qur'anic verses, as well as the earliest historical sources. Hijāb is referred to in the Qur'ān as follows:

five times as hijāb, meaning darkness(13), distance(14), screen(15), veil(16) and curtain(17).

twice as hi-jā-ban, firstly meaning screen(18) and secondly with mastūra meaning the invisible barrier or veil(19).

once only as mah-jū-būn (plural of mahjūb), meaning hidden with coverings or veils(20).

In the Sūras, hijāb refers in some cases directly, in others indirectly to mean partition, seclusion and concealing. The only direct order to women came in the Aḥzāb Sūra, revealed in Madīna end of 5/ Feb 627: "Ask them from before a hijāb (screen)". Hijāb here means curtain or screen, equivalent to sitāra and purda. This refers to the ways of showing respect(21) to the Prophet's wives, "Mothers of Believers"(22) by teaching Muslims the social graces(23) to be practised with the Prophet and his wives.

Historically, the earliest reference of this word relevant to the Prophet's wives came in the early references of the Prophet's biography such as 'Ibn 'Ishāq(24) and 'Ibn Hishām(25). The Ṭabarī(26) mentions according to 'Ā'isha that the Prophet's wives were ordered to take hijāb. Also "Ā'isha called verse 53 of the Aḥzāb Sūra mentioned above, Āyat al-hijāb (the verse of veiling) in which the Prophet's wives were ordered to put on veils, seclude themselves in their houses and to draw curtains or partitions to screen them from men. The commentators of the Qur'ān(27) give the reason of revealing this verse as that "in Madīna, at the early days of Hijra, people neither had curtains on their doors, not partitions inside their houses,

which caused inconvenience to the household". People of the Muhājirūn, especially the Prophet's companions, complained that they had no privacy in their houses. On one occasion, namely the marriage of Zaynab, people had gathered in the Prophet's house, whereby his wives and daughters had to serve food and hold long discussions. This verse was revealed immediately after that occasion.

3) The Qur'anic Verses Relevant to Women's Garments

Since there is no obvious Qur'ānic order for the word hijāb in the sense of seclusion or garments, as seen in the eight previously mentioned Sūras, where then can the other Qur'ānic verses relevant to hijāb be found? Muslim commentators and jurists cite the following Madīna Sūras in support of their statements ordering the hijāb. They are in chronological order, as follows:

Sūra 33, al-Ahzāb, verse 59: Madīna 5/February 627

"Tell thy wives and daughters and the believing women they should cast their outer garments over their persons (when abroad). That is most convenient. That they be known (as such) and not molested and God is forgiving most merciful".

The reason behind this verse was that the youth of Madīna seeking(28) pleasure with women of ill repute, tended to chase Muslim women too. The women and the Prophet's wives complained about this. The Qur'ān advised them to let down upon themselves their jalābīb (over-garments), thereby signifying they were respectable and distinguishable from slaves and women of ill repute.

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Sūra 24, al-Nūr, verse 31: Madīna beginning 6/April 627

"And say to the believing women that they should lower their gaze and guard their beauty ornaments except what (most ordinarily) appear thereof; that they should draw their veils over their bosoms and not display their beauty except to their husbands, etc."

Sūra 24, al-Nūr, verse 60: Madīna beginning 6/April 627

"Such elderly women as one past the prospect of marriage. There is no blame on them if they lay aside their outer garments provided they make not a display of their beauty: but it is best for the to be modest and God is one who sees and knows all things".

The commentary of the Holy Qur'ān gives the reason for revealing these verses so that in Arabia in Jāhiliya times, the women appeared in public with bare bosoms, displaying their ornaments and showing off their beauty(29). The Qur'ān advised Muslim women not to do so, that they should lower their gaze, watch their manners and guard their beauty and ornaments. Even the elderly Muslim women, who were not likely to marry, should guard their appearance and be modest.

These Sūras contain the ḥijāb definitions of all Muslims, which are summarised as follows:

- = let down their jālabīb, pl. of jilbāb (outer garments)(30).
- = draw their khumur, pl. of khimār (veils), over their bosoms(31).
- = lay aside their ṭhiyāb, pl. of ṭhawb (outer garments)(32).
- = guard their zīna (beauty and ornaments)(33).
- = make no display of their tabarruj and zīna (beauty and ornaments)(34).
- = ʾillā mā zahara, "except what (must ordinarily) appear thereof(35)".

These are the definitions relevant to ḥijāb in the Qur'ān. Their interpretations were subject to long discussions among Muslim commentators and jurists. They were inclined to use the word ḥijāb to define garments appropriate for Muslim women. This happened one century after the death of Muhammad when his traditions began to be written down.

B) The Ḥijāb and its Associated Meaning in Islam

From the renderings of the word ḥijāb in classical lexicons and Qur'ānic verses, we understand that this word became a term which interprets the function of the ḥijāb in Islam as follows:

- 1) Staying indoors: to seclude women in their houses according to the verse qarna fī b̄yūtikunna: "And stay quietly in your house(36)".
- ii) Curtains: to put a partition or a curtain between men and women when communicating, according to the Aḥzāb verse: "Ask them from behind a screen(37)".

iii) Garments: to put on particular garments, or veil, when venturing outdoors; according to the Qur'ān they are jilbāb, khimār and thīyāb.

iv) Chastity: to be modest in one's manner, like lowering the gaze, guarding one's beauty and not displaying one's ornaments to men except to one's maḥaram (close relatives, brothers, etc.). According to the Aḥzāb and Nūr Sūras, this is ghaḍḍ al-baṣar, al-zīna and illā mā zahara minhā (what appear as the hidden beauty), and avoiding tabarruj (make-up and jewellery).

C) The Qur'ānic Dress Code Relevant to the Hijāb

The items of women's garments as drawn from the Qur'ān are:

Zīna

Tabarruj

Jilbāb

Khimār

Sitāra

We will proceed to take each item into consideration as it appears in the Qur'an. The word ḥijāb has been extensively examined, just as the jilbāb, khimār and sitāra will be studied later after the zīna and tabarruj, which the vast majority of Muslim jurists believe form part of the ḥijāb. By discussing the various translations of the latter two items made by commentators (who supported their theories on this subject mainly on the Ḥadīth and Sunna, and by tracing their meanings through Arabic glossaries, we will undoubtedly discover the reason for considering these two terms not only as part of the ḥijāb, but its formation, limits and shape as well.

ZĪNA

Zīna is a generalisation made on any device used to enhance one's appearance, such as clothes, make-up, jewellery, etc. The Qur'ān lays down a general rule on zīna where one's toilette(38) is concerned, be it spiritual or artificial ornamentation. Zīna(39) is therefore regarded either as natural or artificial beauty. Natural ornamentation(40) refers to the natural beauty we are all born with, particularly where women are concerned.

The majority of commentators translate zīna as being "make not display of their beauty", whereby women should not display their beauty through artificial means, which include make-up, jewellery and transparent clothes(41).

'ILLĀ MĀ ZAHARA

"What is thereof appears". Commentators agree this refers to:

the visible outer garments, covering inner under-skirts and heavily embroidered under-garments;

the daily necessary bodily actions, such as eating and drinking, which cause certain physical parts to be revealed(42);

those permissibly uncovered bodily parts, such as a woman's hands, feet, face, etc., which may be further unintentionally uncovered by the elements (wind or rain).

THE HIDDEN ZĪNA

Numerous disagreements have arisen regarding the definition of the "hidden zīna". Some(43) say this is jewellery worn to emphasise a garment, a silk garment. Others argue it is the perfumes, make-up, etc., used to enhance one's beauty further.



TABARRUJ

This defines putting together all such beautifying devices previously mentioned, as was customary during the Jāhiliya period(44). Zīna and tabarruj(45) include both natural and artificial ornamentation. Women are advised not to make a spectacle of themselves, revealing their bodies, or appearing in semi-dress, except when in the presence of(46) their:

husbands, immediate relatives (such as fathers, brothers, nephews, etc.) living in the household;
maid-servants attending them. Some commentators include any believing Muslim women. This, however, is social and is not customary - visitors are usually received in formal dress;
serving male or female slaves;
old or infirm male servants; and
infants or small children still sexually unaware of themselves(47).

To summarise our analysis, it has been unanimously accepted that ornaments of any form are prohibited in Islam. Thus, the jilbāb and khimār come to be the only form of acceptable garment.

D) The Hijāb Categories

From all above linguistic and Qur'anic examination, we understand that Muslim jurists and commentators who contributed largely to the lexicons agree that the hijāb began with the Qur'ān. Examining the word hijāb throughout these Qur'ānic verses was essential to clarify its vague introduction.

Three categories of hijāb are:

- i) Seclusion: The hijāb in the meaning of seclusion was enjoined on the Prophet's wives only as a mark of honour, by asking them to stay in their houses, and to draw a screen between themselves and all Muslim men.
- ii) Manners: The word hijāb was adapted to express a particular type of behaviour among Muslims - men and women - to be decent, modest and to avoid sexual gestures.
- iii) Garments: The Qur'ān mentions general items of costumes commonly used in Arabia - jilbāb and khimār - to be the dress codes for the hijāb.

To conclude this analysis, the chronological sequence of these categories is as follows:

In the Prophet's household

- i) to heed one's use of words and gestures.
- ii) to clean one's heart for a better conscience.
- iii) to avoid unnecessary trips outside the home.
- iv) to avoid making a spectacle of oneself as it was during the Jāhiliya period.
- v) to seek permission in entering the Prophet's private chambers.
- vi) to partition oneself off from visiting menfolk.

Amongst other Muslim women

- i) to wear a longer outer garment - jalābīb - when venturing abroad.
- ii) to lower one's gaze when talking to strangers.
- iii) to conceal one's body respectfully.
- iv) to reveal oneself only to the husband, father, etc.
- v) to wear a khimār (veil) long enough to cover the bosom.
- vi) to avoid drawing attention to one's beauty.
- vii) for unmarried, elderly ladies, to display themselves modestly when unveiled.

2. HISTORICAL STUDY

A) The Status of the Prophet's Wives

Muhammad lived in a simple house which was built along the eastern side of the mosque, not having direct access to the mosque, but built as part of its structure(48). In it were some nine apartments of simple mud walls, palm-branch thatch, low ceilings - the dimensions of which were only twelve or fourteen feet square - and a doorway protected by a screen of goat and camel hair. 'Aisha's apartment had a wooden door. Some had an outer room or verandah formed by a second wall; in others, this wall was replaced by a mere-partition of palm twigs daubed with mud. At the door of 'Aisha's chamber was a closet where in the evening or at night, the Prophet would retire for his devotions. The furnishings were in keeping - a leather mattress stuffed with palm coir was spread upon the floor, with pillows of the same material(49).

To the north of the mosque a sheltered bench was provided for the poor followers of the Prophet, called 'aṣḥāb al-Ṣuffa(50). From this gesture we can see the Prophet's house was open to all Muslim men and women who visited regularly, arriving at all hours of the day (often without

invitation) to seek his advice and guidance. The Prophet was, however, a humble and generous man, extending (as was expected of him) his hospitality to all, whatever inconvenience that caused. This is why the Aḥzāb Sūra (end of 5/February 627) deals with the manner in which the Prophet and his household were to be treated upon meeting them. Apart from this, the dignity and respectability of the womenfolk in the Prophet's household had to be taken into account, thus the Aḥzāb Sura clarifies their difference from other Muslim women.

The Prophet's wives(51) were not like ordinary women, nor were their marriages ordinary ones in which only personal or social consideration enter. With that, guidelines were laid down to safeguard their honour, protecting them from insult and slander in their daily activities.

The Qur'ān gave the Prophet's wives a social difference in saying:

"O consorts of the Prophet
Ye are not like any of the
(Other) women(52)".

They were also in turn expected to heed their public behaviour whether at home or abroad, above all to avoid making a spectacle of themselves, as in former times of the Jāhiliyya:

"And stay quietly in your houses
and make not a dazzling display
like that of the former times of
ignorance(53)".

They were to follow the Prophet's humble, simplified life-style. Indeed, the womenfolk did on one occasion voice their objection to the Prophet's modest living conditions, whereupon he vacated the premises for over one month, giving them the alternative of either accepting his ways or facing divorce(54). In any case, the wives had no choice but to be exposed to public scrutiny until the Prophet took further steps to convince them to cover themselves by using a sitāra (curtain or screen):

"Ask them from behind a screen(55)".

According to 'Ibn Sa'ad(56), the Muslim community were not accustomed to having sitūr (partitions or curtains) separating rooms in their houses. It was normal practice to find people going to bed at all times throughout the day.

Soon enough, the Qur'an was to advise Muslims to mend their ways, permitting them to visit friends only three times daily, either in the early morning, at noon or after supper(57).

From the_ above Qur'ānic verses, we understand that Islam_ showed the Muslims how to behave in a truly respectable manner in their social lives, besides proving the Prophet's wives had a place of dignity and honour beyond ordinary women because of the high position of the Prophet himself. They were the first Muslim ladies and are addressed by the Qur'ān as "Mothers of the Faithful"(58).

They should not remarry(59) after the Prophet's death.

They should stay quitely(60) in their houses.

They should not leave unless strictly necessary.

They were to make no vulgar display as in pagan times(61).

They might attend necessary religious and social practices.

They might give advice to all Muslims. If they were consulted by men, they should answer from behind a sitāra(62).

This was the hijāb of the Prophet's wives and daughters, and those were the circumstances of the Aḥzāb Sūra, and this is why this Sūra refers to the manners and behaviour of all Muslims, men and women. Moreover, most of the commentators believe that in the verse of Sūra 53:

"Ask them from behind a hijāb (curtain)."

is the first time that the hijāb was mentioned. I am willing to add that this sitāra was for the Prophet's wives only.

B) The Start of the Hijāb and the Revelation of the Aḥzāb and the Nūr Sūras

Sunna sources state that the hijāb started among the Prophet's wives and agree that it began in the second half of 5/627. ʿĀīsha said, "He recognised me because he had seen me before we [the Prophet's wives] were commanded the hijāb(63)." Here ʿĀīsha refers to an incident that took place after the Battle of Banū al-Mustaliq (Shaʿbān 5/627). This quotation has been used repeatedly by the commentators of the Qurʾān and by early Muslim historians(64). The Qurṭubī(65) believe that the hijāb had been started on the wedding day of Zaynab to the Prophet, which took place in the second half of 5/627. It was around the same date that a big dinner party had been given by the Prophet to his companions and followers in his house. Zaynab was among the

guests, although she was in a corner of the same room, but the Prophet's closest companion, ʿUmar, rejected this modesty and advised the Prophet to seclude his wives. As a reaction, the Prophet responded to this request by asking his wives and daughters to cover themselves when they met people. Also the Qur'ān, for this reason revealed the verse:

"Ask them from behind a ḥijāb (screen)."

With the same order of the sitāra (screen), the ḥijāb of the Prophet's wives was followed by another command to them; this too came in a Qur'anic order saying:

"Qarna (stāy) in your houses with dignity and peace(66)."

However, we understand that the ḥijāb in the meaning of seclusion by sitāra (screen or curtain) and by staying in the houses with dignity was at this time enjoined upon the Prophet's wives only. This was due to the continuous stream of courtiers, visitors and suitors. Such a restriction was to counteract any danger that might arise from the too free admission of the Prophet's companions, followers and strangers who would hardly be expected to be free from temptation. For other Muslim women, the ḥijāb was begun in a different way, and not in the same form as that for the Prophet's wives. It was a kind of advice rather than an order(67).

C) The Historical Evidence of the Prophet's Wives Hijāb

- The Tabarī(68) refers to a particular incident which occurred at the return of the Prophet's expedition at Banū al-Muṣṭaliq (end 5/627). When the march was ordered, 'Ā'isha was not in her tent, having gone to search for a valuable necklace she had dropped. As her litter was enclosed, it was not noticed that she was not in it until the army reached the next halt. Meanwhile, finding the camp had gone, she sat down to rest hoping that someone would come back to fetch her. When her absence was noticed it was night, so she wrapped herself in her jilbāb(69) and fell asleep. Next morning she was found when Ṣafwān b. al-Mu'attal, who had been left behind at the camp expressly to pick up anything inadvertently left behind, passed by and recognised 'Ā'isha. She immediately covered her face because they (the Prophet's wives) were commanded the hijāb. However, he did not speak to her, but turned his face away (because she was the Prophet's wife) while she mounted the camel. He put her on his camel and brought her, leading the camel himself. This gave an excuse for enemies to raise a malicious scandal against 'Ā'isha. Afterwards, the Qur'ān cleared 'Ā'isha's name. This version is an evidence that the hijāb was begun for the Prophet's wives only by a sitāra (screen) and

garments. This view is supported by another story about 'Ā'isha(70) herself. Later in the Battle of al-Jamal, when she joined the army to fight the Caliph/Imām 'Alī to revenge the assassination of the Caliph 'Uthmān (36/656), 'Umm Salma (another wife of the Prophet) severely criticised 'Ā'isha's breaking out of her house by saying to her:

"What answer are you giving in breaking of
the hijāb, which is commanded on us by
the Apostle of 'Allah?"

The Caliph/Imām 'Alī, seeing the Prophet's wife in the middle of the battle did not fight her, but ordered her to mount her camel covered under her litter, and sent her back to Madīna accompanied by women only, and reminded her that she was not permitted to break the hijāb of the Prophet's wives.

Another wife, Sawda, secluded herself in her hujra (room) until her death, believing that she had obeyed 'Allah's command in hijāb(71).

Further evidence of the hijāb of the Prophet's wives comes from 'Ibn Sa'd(72) speaking about Asmā', daughter of the Arab king of Najd, who offered her as a wife to the Prophet. The Prophet sent one of his followers to escort her to Madīna. She enquired from him about the way that a Prophet's wife should act, and his reply was:

"The wife of 'Allah's Apostle should hijāb (veil) herself and tagurr (stay) in her house. No man, other than Muhammad should contact her directly unless a curtain or screen is drawn between them."

Although she did not marry the Prophet, 'Asmā' lived in Madīna until the time of Caliph 'Umar (13-23/634-44) when she married an immigrant. Then she gave an explanation to the furious Caliph 'Umar(73), who was angry on hearing that one of the Prophet's wives had broken her hijāb, by saying:

"She never married the Prophet

Was never commanded the hijāb

Never called 'Umm al-Mū'minīn (Mother of Believers)."

More evidence comes from the time of the Prophet. According to the Ḥadīth related to 'Umm Salma, one day she was sitting with the Prophet along with Maymūna (or 'Āisha), when Ibn Maktūm, who was a blind man, called on the Prophet. The Prophet told them to observe the hijāb for him. 'Umm Salma said, "Is he a blind man? Neither will he see us, nor recognise us." The Prophet said, "Are you also blind? Do you not see him(74)?"

All the above Hadiths and versions reveal that the hijāb in the sense of screen, seclusion and having no direct contact with men, was first ordained for the Prophet's wives, who since then have been called "Mothers of Believers" and not allowed to remarry after the Prophet's death. However, this was very clear in Qur'ānic verses along with other guidelines to the Prophet's wives and Muslim men to adopt particular manners with the Prophet's wives "Mothers of Believers". It seems this injunction continued even after the Prophet's death, and most probably was more strict under the reign of the Caliph ʿUmar Ibn al-Khaṭṭāb (13-23/634-44), who was reported to be proud of his three achievements in Islam, saying:

"I obeyed my God in three (incidents),
prisoners of Badr, ʿIbrāhīm's place,
and the hijāb(75)."

He was very strict in carrying out the practices of Islam, I believe even more so than the Prophet himself, and the reason for enforcing the hijāb of the Prophet's wives "Mothers of Believers" on other Muslim women soon after the Prophet's death, could be due to the quick expansion of Islam outside Arabia among non-Arab people founding a new society, and the fear of the Prophet's successors, the

Rāshidūn (11-40/632-41), that Islam might lose its social domination over people. They were the Prophet's closest companions and observed the radical changes in Arabia from Jāhiliya to Islam. They feared that the absence of the Prophet might result in losing the simple traditional life of the early Muslims, which happened later in the 'Umayyad period.

Political and social studies of the critical time of the Prophet's first five years of his emigration to Madina (1-5/622-27) throws light on the circumstances which caused the beginning of the hijāb. In fact, intensive study of the Aḥzāb and the Nūr Sūrah⁴ shows that a hijāb had begun, but only among the Prophet's wives, in order to identify them as the honourable first ladies - the "Mothers of Believers". These verses request them as follows:

"And qarna (stay in houses)(76)."

"And ask them from behind a hijāb (screen)(77)."

The traditional commentators, and even modern scholars who have studied this subject with the intention either to defend or oppose it, failed to identify the forms of the hijāb because they misjudged its character and invoked such radical forms of sexual segregation as the complete veiling of ordinary women.

However, it is understood from Ḥadīth and historical sources that the fifth year of Hijra/627 was the date of beginning the ḥijāb. I have managed to derive three particular incidents as evidence of this form of ḥijāb:

- 1) The wedding day of Zaynab to the Prophet (5/627)
- 11) The marriage of 'Asmā', daughter of the king of Najd, to the Prophet (5/629).
- 111) The attendance of 'Ā'isha at the Battle of al-Jamal (35/657).

The last item supporting this point of view is that of the Nisā', the women's Sūra(78). This Sūra contains 176 verses dealing with social problems immediately after the Battle of Uhud, and consists of two parts: one of which deals with women, orphans, inheritance, marriage and family affairs in general; the other deals with the Muslim community and its problems in Madīna. This Sūra contains no mention of ḥijāb or of women's garments, or even any reference to ordinary women's manners or behaviour, while the Aḥzāb Sūra contains 72 verses, of which 20 verses determine the position of the Prophet's wives and refers to their ḥijāb in clear words.

From all the above Qur'ānic verses and traditions, we understand that the implementation of the ḥijāb was different from ordinary Muslim and exceptional Muslim women,

of which there were none but the Prophet's wives. Therefore, the exact function of the word ḥijāb, literally and socially was applied to the Prophet's wives only. Thus, the adoption of the ḥijab, enjoined among all Muslim women, either by following willingly the practice of the Prophet's wives, or by interpretation of the Qur'anic verses which advise ordinary Muslim women to follow particular manners and wear a particular garment such as the jilbāb and khimār, upon which I will concentrate in the following chapters. Before doing so, the next question is: Had this form of ḥijāb been practised in Arabia before Islam, or not?

* * *

NOTES ON CHAPTER I

- (1) Ibn Manẓūr, Lisān al-ʿArab, Vol. 1, Beirut ed., no date; al-Fayrūzābādī, al-Qāmūs al-Muḥīṭ, Vol. 1, p. 298, Cairo (1919); al-Jawharī, Siḥāḥ al-Lughā, Vol. 1, ed. Cairo (AH 1377); al-Zabīdī, Tāj al-ʿArūs.
- (2) al-Jawharī, op. cit.
- (3) al-Zabīdī, op. cit.
- (4) All books of lexicology mentioned in note no. (1) agree on this definition.
- (5) Ibn Hishām, Sīrat Ibn Hishām, 4 vols., al-ʿAzharīa ed., Vol. I, p. 158; al-ʿAzraqī, Tarīkh Makka, Dār al-Andalus (AH 1352), Vol. 2, p. 65; Sālim, Sayyid, Taʾrīkh al-Dawla al-ʿArabīa, Beirut (1971), p. 368.
- (6) The Holy Qurʾān, Sūra 19, Mary, verse 17. The verse and chapter numbers of Qurʾānic quotations comply with the standard English translation of Muḥammad Yūsuf ʿAlī, The Holy Qurʾān, Text and Commentary, Lahore, Pakistan (1951).
- (7) The Holy Qurʾān, Sūra 18, al-Aʿrāf (Heights), verse 41.
- (8) All books of lexicology mentioned above agree that the ḥijāb is sitr.
- (9) Wehr, Hans, Arabic-English Dictionary, Pennsylvania (1976), p. 397.
- (10) Sitra, The Holy Qurʾān, Sūra 18, al-Kahaf (the Cave), verse 90.
- (11) Al-Jādīr, Walīd, Assyrian Crafts (in Arabic), Baghdad (1972), p. 272.
- (12) al-Mawdūdī, ʿAbū al-Aʿlā, Purdah and the Status of Women in Islam (Arabic translation), Damascus (1976), p. 17.
- (13) The verse the chapter numbers of Qurʾānic quotations comply with the standard English translation of Muḥammad Yusuf Ali, The Holy Qurʾān, Text and Commentary, Lahore, Pakistan (1951).

Ṣād Sūra, Makka 38:32: "Until [the sun] was hidden in the ḥijāb (veil) [of the light]".

This verse relates to King Solomon who had great wealth and a vast army. When he was parading his magnificent horses one day, he missed his evening prayers which took place at sunset. The word ḥijāb here means the sunset.

- (14) Sūra 14, Fuṣṣilat (Explained), Makka 616 AD, verse 5: "Our hearts are under veils [concealed] from that to which thou dost invite us, and in our ears is deafness, and between us and thee is a hijāb (screen): so do though [what thou wilt]. We shall do [what we will]".

This means that there is a distance or barrier to understanding.

- (15) Sūra 42, al-Shūrā (Consultation), Makka 616 AD, verse 51: "It is not fitting for a man that God should speak to him except by inspiration or from behind hijāb (veil) or by sending a messenger".

The meaning of "behind a veil" is not a material veil or screen (purdah), but that mystic veil of light. It means only the men of God will hear His words.

- (16) Sūra 7, al-Aʿrāf (the Heights), end of Makkan period 620 AD, verse 46: "Between them shall be a hijāb (veil) and on the heights will be men who would know everyone by his marks."

This Sūra describes the people of Heaven and Hell on Doomsday. They shall be separated by a partition like a veil.

- (17) Sūra 33, al-Ahzāb (Confederates), Madina, Shawāl 5/April 627
verse 53: "... and when ye ask [his ladies] for anything ye want ask them from before a hijāb (screen), that makes for greater purity for your hearts and for theirs."

The word hijāb here means the material veil. The exact meaning for it is a screen or (purdah) curtain, al-Mawdūdī, op. cit.

- (18) Sūra 19, Marya, Makka period 614-15 AD, verse 17: "Related in the Book [the story of] Mary when she withdrew from her family to a place in the east..."

Sūra 17: "She placed a hijāb [screen to screen herself] from them ..."

The meaning of the hijāb is both a screen and the seclusion of the Virgin Mary from her people to devote herself to prayer.

- (19) Sūra 17, al-'Isrā' (the Children of Israel), Makka period 615-16 AD, verse 45: "When thou dost recite the Qur'ān we put between thee and those who believe not in the hereafter hijāban mastūra (an invisible veil)."

Hijāban here has a figurative meaning. It refers to people and things. 'Ibn Kathīr translates mastūra as "a thick dark veil that renders objects invisible". See Mukhtasar tafsīr 'ibn Kathīr, revised by M. al-Ṣābūnī, 3 vols., ed. Beirut (AH 1401), Vol. 2, p. 354.

- (20) Sūra 83, al-Mutafifūn (Dealing in Fraud), Makka 610-14 AD, verse 15: "Verily [from the light of] their Lord that day will be mahjūbūn (veiled)."

They will be hidden by veils from the eyes of the sinful, will not see God and God will not see them.

- (21) According to 'Ibn 'Abbās, the people of Madīna in the early days of Hījra, did not have curtains or partitions either at their doors or in their houses. Abū Dāwūd, ʿAwn al-Ma'bud, known as Sunnan Abī Dāwūd, 4 vols., Cairo (AH 1280), Vol. 2, p. 369.

- (22) Sūra 33, al-Ahzāb (Confederates), verse 6: "The Prophet is closer to the Believers than their own selves. And his wives are their mothers ..."

- (23) *ibid*, verse 53: "... nor is it right for ye that ye should annoy God's apostle or that ye should marry his widows after him at any time."

- (24) 'Ibn Ishāq (d. AH 280), Sirat 'Ibn Ishāq, known as Kitāb al-Mubtada', "The Biography of the Prophet Muhammad", Arabic text. Revised by M. Hamid Allah, Rabat (1976).

- (25) For details of Muhammad's personal life at the Madīna, see 'Ibn Hishām, Vol. 4, pp. 321-6; Ibn Sa'ād, Vol. 2, p. 185; Sahih al-Bukhari, Vol. 6, p. 293. For a translation of both 'Ibn Ishāq's and 'Ibn Hishām's books into English, see Guillaume, The Life of Muhammad, 7th edition, Oxford (1982).

- (26) al-Ṭabarī, Tārīkh al-Rusul wal-Mulūk (Annales), ed. de Goeje, 13 vols., Brill, Leiden (1879-1901), Vol. 2, p. 449.

- (27) *ibid*, *op. cit.*, p. 370.

- (28) 'Ibn Kathir, 'Imād al-Dīn Ismā'il, Tafsir al-Qur'ān "The Commentary of the Qur'an", 10 vols., Cairo (1356/1937), Vol. 2, p. 598.
- (29) *ibid*, p. 602.
- (30) al-Ahzāb (the Confederates), verse 59.
- (31) al-Nūr (the Light), Madīna, verse 31.
- (32) *ibid*, 60.
- (33) *ibid*, 31.
- (34) *ibid*, 60.
- (35) *ibid*, 31.
- (36) al-Ahzāb, verse 33.
- (37) *ibid*, verse 53: "Let them draw their khumur (veils)."
- (38) Sūra 7, al-A'raf, Makka, verse 32:
 "Say, who has prohibited the zīna (adornment) of Allah which He had brought forth for His servants."
 Generally, the word zīna has been understood to mean apparel.
- (39) Lane, E. W., Arabic-English Lexicon, London (1863-93), "Zīna", Vol. 7, pp. 62-4.
- (40) al-Rāzī, Fakhr al-Dīn, Ahkām al-Qur'ān, 8 vols., Cairo (AH 1307), Vol. 5, p. 173. According to Abū Dāwūd, the authenticity of this Ḥadīth is not certain. Sunnan Abū Dāwūd, Vol. 2, p. 383.
- (41) According to those who had agreed with this definition claimed that their was based on the Ḥadīth narrated by 'Ā'isha, who reported that the Prophet had seen 'Asma, Aisha's sister, in a transparent dress, and told her that having reached womanhood, she should not unashamedly reveal her body.
- (42) According to Abū Dāwūd, See 'Ibn Kathīr, *opp. cit.*, Nūr, Vol. 2, p. 600.

- (43) According to 'Ibn Mas'ūd, *ibid.*
- (44) The tabarruj, as Ibn Mujāhid explained, is that women appear among men wearing all their finery. Qatāda adds the adornment. See al-Qurtubī, al-Jāmi' li-Ahkām al-Qur'ān, Cairo (1945), 12 vols., Vol. 2, p. 101.
- (45) Other commentators of the Qur'an described the tabarruj as "the woman drew the khimār loosely behind her shoulder and revealed her bosom and jewellery after the fashion of Jāhiliyya". Al-Qurtubī and 'Ibn Kathīr, *opp. cit.*
- (46) 'Ali, , *op. cit.*, p. 904.
- (47) *ibid.*
- (48) Creswell, K. A., Early Muslim Architecture, 2 vols., Oxford (1932-40), Vol. 1, p. 7.
- (49) 'Abdallāh 'Ibn Yazīd said that he saw the houses in which the wives of the Prophet lived at the time when 'Umar 'Ibn 'Abd al-'Azīz, the Umayyad Governor of Madīna (100/719) demolished them. He counted nine houses. Muir, Sir William, The Life of Mahomet from Original Sources, 3rd edition, London (1894), p. 117.
- (50) Ashāb al-Suffa were the poorest people amongst the Makkan immigrants. Because they had no shelter, the Prophet dedicated this place to them to live in. The Prophet and his companions used to send them food from their own tables. These poor people were to become the teachers, spreading Islam amongst non-believers outside Madīna. 'Ibn Sa'd, Kitāb al-Tabaqāt al-Kubra, Leiden (322/1959), Vol. 1, p. 255; Creswell, *opp. cit.*, p. 8; Fikry, Ahmad, al-Madkhal ilā Masājid al-Qāhira "The Introduction to the Mosques of Cairo", Alexandria (1961), p. 276.
- (51) Ibn Sa'd cites the number of the Prophet's wives in the Madīna in 5/627, as: (1) Sawda, daughter of Zam'a, married Makka 620; (2) 'Aisha, daughter of Abu Bakr, married 1/622; (3) 'Umm Ḥabīb, daughter of Abū Sufyān; (4) Zaynab, daughter of Khuzayma 4/626; (5) 'Umm Salma Hind, daughter of Abu 'Umayya; (6) Zaynab, daughter of Jaḥash, 5/end 626; (7) Jūwayryya, daughter of Ḥārith, 5/end 626; 8) Maymūna, daughter of Ḥārith; (9) Safiyya, daughter of Akhtab, end 5/627; (10) Mayya the Copt. See 'Ibn Ishāq, *opp. cit.*, p. 76.

- (52) al-Ahzāb, 33: 32.
- (53) ibid, 33:33.
- (54) "O Prophet, say to thy consorts, if it be they desire the life of this world and its glitter then come! I will provide for your enjoyment and set free in a handsom manner", al-Ahzāb, 33:28.
- (55) ibid, 33:53.
- (56) Ibn Sa'ad, op . cit., Vol. 7, p. 102.
- (57) al-Nūr, 24:58.
- (58) al-Ahzāb, 33:6: "The Prophet is closer to the Believers than their own selves, and his wives are their mothers."
- (59) op . cit.:53: "... nor is it right that ye should annoy God's apostle or that ye should marry his widows after him any time"
- (60) op . cit.: 33: "And qarna (stay quietly) in your houses."
- (61) ibid: "And do not make tabarruj (a dazzling display) like that of Jāhiliya (former times of ignorance)."
- (62) op . cit.: 53: "And when ye ask [his ladies] for anything ye want, ask them from before a hijāb (screen)." 'Ibn Kathīr translates the word hijāb as a sitāra (curtain), opp. cit., Vol. 3, p. 210.
- (63) 'Ibn Kathīr, opp. cit., Vol. 2, p. 500.
- (64) op . cit., Vol. 7, p. 105.
- (65) op . cit., Vol. 3., p. 214.
- (66) 'Umar, the Prophet's closest companion, criticised this manner in telling the Prophet, "O Apostle of Allah, everyone, guilty and innocent, enters your house. It will be better if you ordered them to hijāb (veil) themselves". Therefore, Zaynab, the newly-wed bride of the Prophet replied, "Ye son of Khaṭāb, you want to protect us from people, and the revelation comes into our chambers". Qaṣṭalānī, Ahmed, Commentary on Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī, Bulaq ed. (1876), Vol. 5, p. 5.

- (67) al-Ahzāb, 33:59: "And say to the believing women that they should case their jalābība-hinna (outer garments) over their persons [when] abroad"
- lower their gaze and guard their modesty, that they should not display their beauty and ornament illā mā zahara minhā [what must ordinarily] appear."
- al-Nūr, 24:60: "Such elderly women as are past the prospect of marriage, there is not blame on them if they lay aside thīyāba-hinna (their outer garments) provided they make not a wanton display of their beauty"
- (68) "Ta-lafafatu bi-jilbābī": al-Ṭabarī, opp. cit., Vol. 7, p. 102; al-Yaʿqūbī, Tārīkh al-Yaʿqūbī, Brill (1969), Vol. 2, p. 5.
- (69) "Ta-khamartu bi-jilbābī", opp. cit., Vol. 2, p. 587.
- (70) Ibn Saʿd, opp. cit., Vol. 7, pp. 102-5.
- (71) al-Qurṭubī, opp. cit., Vol. 14, p. 108.
- (72) Ibn Saʿd, opp. cit., Vol. 7, p. 102.
- (73) al-ʿAsqalānī, Ibn Ali, al-Isāba, "The Biography of the Prophet's Companions", no date and no place of publication, Vol. 8, p. 10.
- (74) al-Tarmadhī confirms the certainty of this Ḥadīth, see Jāmiʿ al-Baiyāh fī Ṣaḥīḥ al-Ourʿān, "A Collection of Ḥadīths", al-Ḥalabī Press, Cairo (no date); Ibn Kathīr, opp. cit., Vol. 2, p. 600.
- (75) al-Qurṭubī, opp. cit., Vol. 14, p. 241.
- (76) al-Ahzāb, 33:83.
- (77) opp. cit., 53.
- (78) al-Nisāʾ (The Women), Madīna Shāʿwāl 3/January 625.

C H A P T E R I I

THE EVIDENCE OF THE HIJĀB IN THE ARTS OF THE PRE-ISLAMIC PERIOD

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C H A P T E R I I

THE EVIDENCE OF HIJĀB IN THE ARTS OF THE PRE-ISLAMIC PERIOD

As we have seen in the previous chapter, neither the Qur'ān nor the Sunna were the responsible for imposing the hijāb. Some scholars suggest the hijāb owed its introduction into Islamic practice to Greek and Persian traditions, and to the survival and complete acceptance of the introduction of slavery (bondmaid)(1).

It is difficult to determine whether or not the hijāb originated from Greece or Persia, without first examining its evidence in these civilisations and their contemporary Semitic cultures in the pre-Islamic times. Focusing also on Arab traditions will certainly clear the mysterious introduction of the hijāb into Islam.

Arabs belonged to the Semitic race which included Jews, Aramaeans and Assyrians, all descendants of Ismail, son of the Biblical patriarch Abraham. This association has led some Western scholars(2) to suggest that Islam originated in a Jewish cultural milieu among the partly-Judaised Arab tribes of the Peninsula, who applied certain Judaic ideas on Arab traditions(3).

Arabs are mentioned in Assyrian and Babylonian records as tributaries and marauders threatening the ancient trade routes and drawn into the struggle for control of these, a major feature of Near Eastern history in the 1st millenium BC. Owing to their importance and to their geographical position, the Arabs were drawn into this struggle by the Babylonians, Achaemenids, Greeks, Seleucids, Egyptians and Romans over a period of some thousands of years. At that time the Arabs of the south (from the beginning of the 6th Century BC) had flourish in a succession of kingdoms in Sabá Maṣbīn and Ḥimyar, only to be subdued by the Assyrians in the middle of the 5th Century BC.

In the northern and central parts of the Peninsula, the Arabs who had migrated from the south flourished in a series of petty states. These northern Arabian states(4), like those of the south, drew their strength mainly from commerce and were in no sense militaristic either in their inception or in their development. The earliest among these states was the Nabataean Kingdom (312 BC-105 AD). In the early 6th Century BC, the Nabataeans (al-Anbāt, classical Nabataea) came as a nomadic tribe from what is today called Transjordan, and settled in Petra in the 4th Century BC. Their chiefs and leaders were called kings of the Arabs in Roman and Hebrew records.

They were preceded by the Lakhmids (320-602 AD) based in al-Ḥira, capital of Persian Arabia; then the Ghassanids of Hawran, south-east Damascus (3rd Century BC-613 AD); and Kindah, a state of united tribes of central Arabia titled as malik (king). These states survived up till the birth of Islam, the earliest of which was in Palmyra (Tadmour) (1st-mid 3rd Century AD) situated between the two rival empires of Parthia and Rome, and known as one of the richest cities of the Near East.

The Arabs were not isolated from the ancient civilisations, and played an important role in the economic and cultural aspects of that time. To trace the origin of the hijāb in Arabia it is necessary to begin in the area of Mesopotamia, the birthplace of Abraham.

A) Mesopotamia: The Earliest Representations of the Hijāb in Sumerian and Assyrian Arts

Sumerian art (3rd millenium BC) depicts a variety of exclusive headgear, which although primarily symbolising fertility could be regarded as early indications of women's veils. The most distinctive of this headgear was the turban made up of braids and buns(5) (Fig. 1a-b). Examples of the earliest turbans come from Ur, on the statue of Mes-ka-lam-dug(6) (Fig. 2a-b).



Fig. 1a-b Details of dome-shaped turbans worn by Mes-kalam-dug; stone statues (3rd mill. BC).
Baghdad, Iraqi Museum



Fig. 2a-b Details of pleated turbans worn by Sumerian statuettes from Tel Agrab (2500 BC).
Baghdad, Iraqi Museum

At this early time in history, Sumerian women also wore cloaks and turbans. Unfortunately, however, the Sumerian for these cloaks is not known, the Greek for it being kaunakes. This garment enveloped the whole body, covering only the left shoulder and arm (the right arm and shoulder were bare), and draped loosely over the chest, worn specifically for ritual services.

In the Iraqi Museum, a statue dating from the reign of Gudea, ruler of Lagash(?) (mid 3rd millennium BC) portrays . . . wife of Ashnunak, wearing such a cloak (Fig. 3) from the Diyala region of Mesopotamia.

Also in the Louvre of Paris, two interesting terracotta figurines from Larsa in Sumer (end 3rd millennium BC) portray women carrying children and wearing a head-dress probably of fine material covering the head and falling down over the shoulders. This could be the earliest example of a veil in history (Fig. 4 - Pl. I).

A more developed veil can be seen on a gypsum statue (height 26cm) from the temple of Ishtar at Mari (now Tel al-Hariri), exhibited in the National Museum in Damascus. This statue dates from the Ur period (c. 2900-2460 BC) and is called the "Worshipper Queen" (Fig. 5 - Pl. II), who is dressed in both a turban and cloak or polos, the Greek, for a name

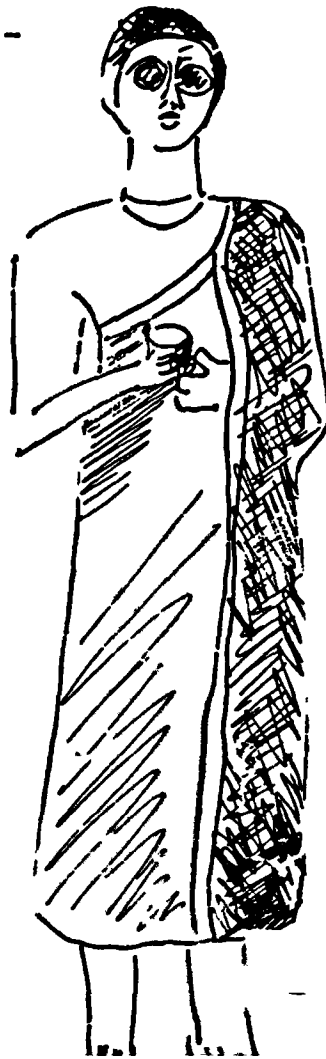


Fig. 3 An early example of the Sumerian kaunakes cloak which covers one shoulder, worn by the wife of Ashnunak; stone statue from Tel Asmar (2500 BC).
Baghdad, Iraqi Museum

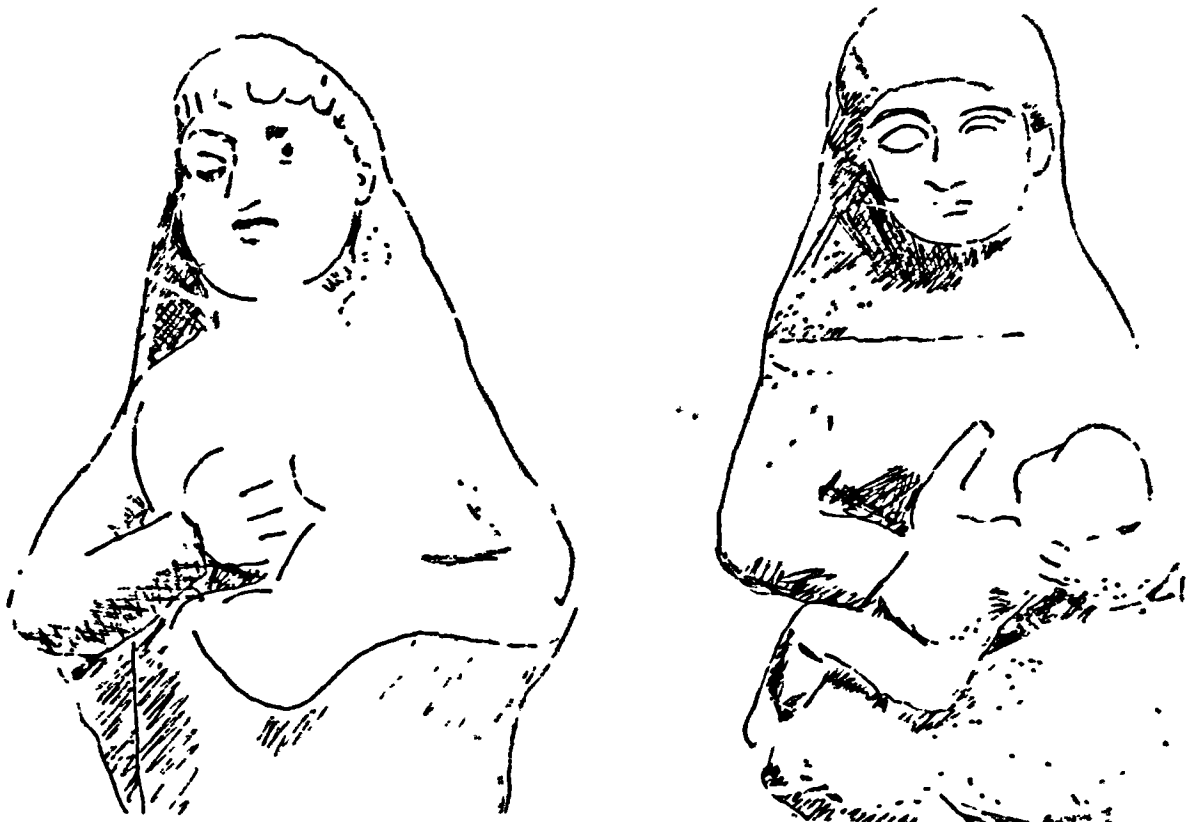


Fig. 4a-b Sumerian headcover, on statuettes from Larsa (3rd mill. BC)
Paris, Louvre



Fig. 5

"The Worshipper Queen" wears a combination of the domed turban, the kaunakes and the fringed polo cloak; statue from Mari, Tel al-Hariri (3rd mill. BC)
Damascus, National Museum

woman's cloak. The kaunakes cloak was worn by men and women alike, while the polo was designed for women only. It had a very distinctive style which could be the earliest example of this type of women's veiling in Mesopotamia.

Sumerian costumes greatly influenced Mesopotamia and her traditions. Statues were often clothed in expensive garments, following the Sumerian customs of religion and magic. From this, it can therefore be said that headgear signified ritual or religious ceremonies, characteristic of the Sumerian, Elamite and Akkadian eras. This custom extended to the Babylonians (2000-1000 BC) whose rituals included segregating virgins devoted to the gods in their temples. The Babylonians wore no particular head-dress, but had numerous variations of the kaunakes cloak (Fig. 6 - Pl. III).

Unlike the Babylonians, the Assyrians (1100-490 BC) mention veiling quite specifically in their Law (7th Century BC) wherein women of high social standing were required to publically wear a distinctive garment as a sign of respectability. Restrictions were also made on women's appearance in public.



Fig. 6

Babylonian kaunakes cloak in a wall painting from Mari, Tel al-Hariri (1800 BC-ancient Babylonian period). Paris, Louvre



Fig. 7

An Assyrian court lady wearing a Sumerian pleated turban and pleated cloak draped over the shoulder. Gypsum statuette. [source: Olmstead, History of Assyria, London (1923), p. 17]

Other Articles of the Law stipulated that:

The wife and the daughter of a noble person should cover herself with a cloak when she appears in public. Only women of low moral character might walk the streets with bare head and on them was obligatory - veiling or head covering was severely punished(8).

Olmstead suggests that "we have here the beginning of oriental seclusion"(9). Among the scarce representations of Assyrian women, we find they wore a fillet or coronet according to their rank, and folded their shawls drawn sometimes over the head. One such example can be seen on a gypsum statue from Ashur, portraying a lady dressed in a full-length robe, with a cloak covering her shoulders and a high round pleated turban on her head (Fig. 7).

It is interesting to note that veiled women are not found on earlier Assyrian reliefs dating from before the reign Tiglat-Pileser III (824-745 BC). At that time, the garment consisted of a skirt and white veil worn in public by aristocratic ladies, worn to distinguished them from the lower classes, foreigners and slaves. Here, it is not known whether or not the Assyrians were adapting earlier examples from Mesopotamia, but it is certain that specific Assyrian terms(10) for these covering garments were given, such as:

nakhlapatu: a luxurious coat for men and women

kabushu: the turban or any turban made of cloth

Although Assyrian Law clearly ordained the use of veils, variations of these were also worn among foreign women, presumably of Arabic or Jewish origin. Babylonian women, however, did not wear veils, but had a fringed shawl instead as worn by women of Elam, Hebrew and Syrian origin (Fig. 8 - Pl. IV). Such foreign women were depicted in Assyrian art with heads covered by a fringed shawl (Fig. 9a-b - Pl. V). By now domed and pleated turbans had disappeared from the heads of foreign women (Fig. 9).

Assyrian court ladies were rarely depicted in illustrations, since by law they were restricted to appear unveiled in public. Among the rare instances of this, were portraits of Assyrian princesses such as Queen Ashur Sharat, wife of Ashur Bani-pal (665-626 BC), wearing a richly embroidered shawl with fringed border, draped over her right shoulder and falling down her back(11) (Fig. 10 - Pl. VIa-b). Since she was within her palace quarters, the queen was allowed to uncover her head. Another portrayal is of Naqia, mother of Esarhaddon, also shown unveiled like Queen Ashur-Sharat. Apart from these, only peasants, servants and slaves are shown as being unveiled.



Fig. 8

Foreign captive women on Assyrian reliefs:

a) from Nineveh (700 BC).
London, British Museum

b) from the Kuyunjik relief of Sannacherib
London, British Museum



Fig 9-a)



Fig 9-b)

Fig. 9

a) The fringed cloak/tunic and plain kethoneth tunic worn by Jewish or Syrian women, on Ashur Nasirapal's bronze gate from Balwar (7th Century BC). Paris, Louvre

b) A "Captive Woman" and an Assyrian soldier, in a wall painting from Barsib. The woman wears a fringed shawl and tunic.
[source: F. Dangein and M. Dunnand, Tel Barsib avec Tell Ahmar Biredjik, Paris (1931), pl. XXIV]

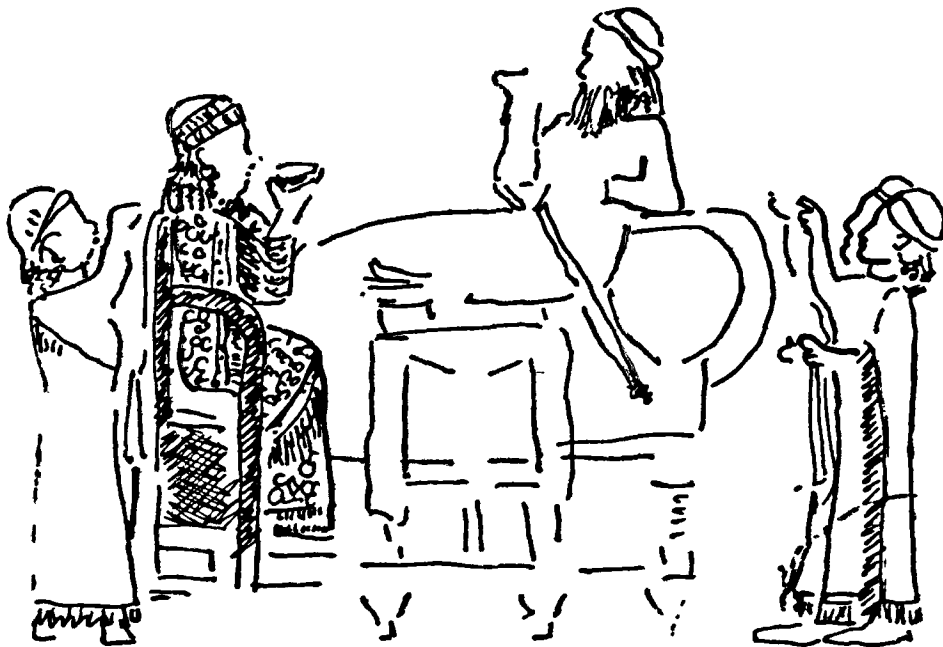
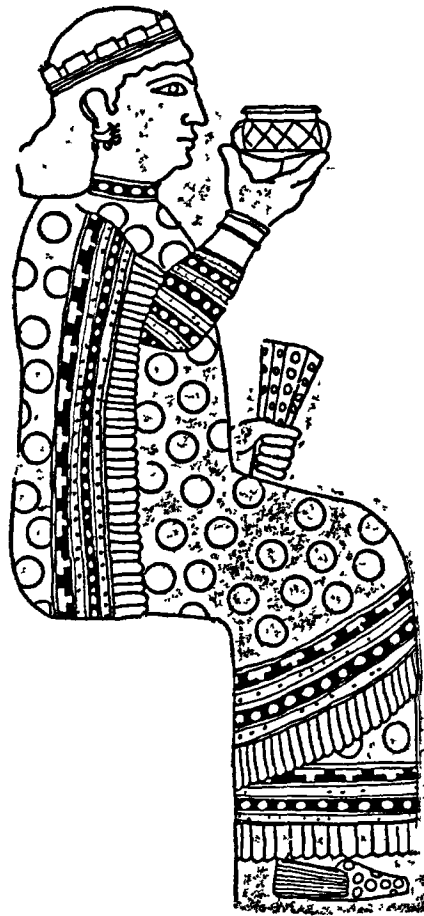


Fig. 10

Queen Ashur Sharat, wife of Ashur Banipal, dressed in a richly embroidered and fringed garment.
[source: 'Ukāshah, al-Fann al-'Irāqī, Beirut (1977), fig. 13b]

It seems that Assyrian veiling dominated Mesopotamian art for a long time after the fall of the Assyrian empire of Ninevah (612 BC), evidence of which was seen in the fashion trends of Hatra (100 BC-250 AD), south of Mosul (Pl. VII). This city was strategically important, situated between the two rival empires of Persia and Rome, and became a cultural centre to the Arabs in the area. In the 1st Century AD, it was governed by an Arab dynasty who bore the title of Kings of the Arabs. Its downfall came with the Sassanids in 270 AD.

Hatran art depicts a combination of ancient Mesopotamian, Greek and Persian influences, which eventually came to be recognised as typically Hatran. The style of the Hatran veil was even borrowed from Sumerian and Assyrian polos, comprising of a simple cloak worn over a richly decorated head-dress usually conical(17) in shape (Fig. 11 - Pl. VIII + IX).

B) Persia: The Persian Hijāb, the Anderun

Consistent evidence of Persian traditions shows that female seclusion seems to have existed in the Achaemenid times, at least among royalty and the aristocracy. Women were regarded as part of men's wealth, and were therefore kept in secluded places. Only the wealthy could afford



Fig. 11

Princess Dawshwari, daughter of the Arab king Sanatruq, wears the Hatran veil combining a cloak and head-dress, presumably of Assyrian and Persian origin. - The richly decorated conical head-dress is covered by what seems to be a thin veil. Stone statue from Hatra (138 AD). Baghdad, Iraqi Museum, No. 56752

separate palaces, houses, guards, servants and chamberlains to keep their womenfolk safe. Veiling women by seclusion in the harim style, symbolised aristocracy and affluence, as noted in Persian history by Herodotus (c. 484-425 BC)(12).

Although a reference is made in the Book of Esther on Queen Vashti's refusal to appear unveiled before Ahsaueros(13), there is regrettably little positive mention of women. They are not even represented among the sculptured reliefs of Persepolis.

Veiling and seclusion began as early as the time of Ahsaueros (Xueras/Xerxes) in 485-465 BC(14), where terms such as "house of women", "custody of chamberlain" or "keeper of women" were consistently mentioned in the palace household. Hence, the reason why portraits of women were rare among Persian reliefs (Fig. 12^{a-b} Pl. X).

After the fall of Nineveh (612 BC), Assyrian court fashion became popular among the Achaemenids, which under Darius (521-485 BC) consisted of a long gown with wide sleeves and a veil that fell almost to the ground (Fig. 12). This trend continued right through to the Sasanian period, when under the reign of Aršādhir I (224-241 AD), his queen seems to have appeared unveiled only behind an enclosure, screening her from men (Fig. 13).

Seclusion and veiling of women is also mentioned in Persian literature, written in Arabic. Its themes are based on the legendary past of the Sasanian emperors.

Polygamy was encouraged and the upper class followed the aristocracy in keeping wives secluded in litters, screening them off by closely drawn curtains, whether at home or on journeys(18)(Pl. XI). Little, however, is known on the actual style of women's garments in those earlier times before the 5th Century BC. What is known is that most of their hair was hidden under a veil and a fillet or cap, worn behind a row of curls on the forehead. The Sasanian period saw little change in the veil, until later when it became smaller due to the Hellenistic influence(19). Another popularly worn veil simply hung over the head down to the shoulders and back (Fig. 14).

Throughout her history, Persia had a tremendous cultural influence on the ancient Near East and Asia in the pre-Islamic period. This influence, coupled with political domination since the Achaemenid (550-330 BC) and Sassanid (226-642 AD) empires, included both Mesopotamia and Afghanistan among its territories. Persian fashion was also an influence on the people of these areas, as well as on the neighbouring nations of Hatra, Dura-Europos and Palmyra.



Fig. 12

- a) A plain cloak with plain border covers the head and falls down over the body; Achaeminid Stele (early 5th Century BC).
Istanbul, Archaeological Museum
- b) Plain veil attached to a crown, on a relief from Susa (late 5th Century BC).
Paris, Louvre



Fig. 13

A detail of a Sassanian relief shows the queen unveiled behind an enclosure, Naqsh-e Rostam (3rd Century AD).
[source: Girshman, Iran, London (1964), p. 264]



Fig. 14

Typical Sassanian veil attached to a crown, falling behind the shoulder, on a rug found in Pazyryk (4th-3rd Century BC).
Leningrad, Hermitage Museum
[source: Girshman, Iran, London (1964), Pl. 468]

Veils were of long translucent cloth attached to a crown or head-dress which varied in shape, but was mostly conical(17). Cloaks and mantles showed little variation from the original Achaeminian one with its long plain border, also used for cover outer garments (Fig. 12 - Pl. XII).

While Persia and trans-Saxonia were influenced by the Achaemenid aristocratic trend of veiling the womenfolk, other parts of the ancient Near East were in turn influenced by Persia. This apparently continued right up to Sassanian times, and extended right through to Islamic Persia.

C) Some Aspects of the Hijāb in Greek, Romans and Byzantian Arts

Greek women lived comparatively in more freedom, unlike their Near Eastern counterparts. They moved freely in public and gained rights under Greek Law in matters such as marriage or inheritance. This continued to the ancient Romans who from the 9th Century BC onwards (in what is now Italy), are believed to have been emigrants from the civilisations of Greece and Asia Minor(20).

Women, up to the Olympic Games in 720 BC, wore a veil reminiscent of that worn in many Near Eastern and Mediterranean countries, comprising of a white veil and fillet (blue-black for mourning)(21). This drapery sometimes served the purpose of covering the head in religious ceremonies. The mantle, the himation, is probably the most distinctive item of Greek costume. Falling symmetrically over both shoulders, it is like the Homeric chalin in its form and draping. At this classical period neither upper- nor lower-class women covered their heads (Pl. XIII).

Early examples of head covering called kredomnon, consisted of a round, wide-brimmed hat with a high crown in the centre, seen on Tangra figurines (or tholia) from the round buildings called tholos. Slaves and mourners wore kerchief head coverings under which the hair was bound by fillets and ribbons (Pl. XIV).

In contrast to the Greek democracy, the Romans reflected class, society, profession and trade, and again restrictions were made on women's appearances. Roman Law contained Articles defining women's rights whereby: they became part of men's fortunes; they were forbidden from attending public ceremonies; they had to avoid adornments

in public; and were ordered to put veils on their heads when attending religious rituals, according to Oppius Lex(22) issued in 215 BC. Restrictions were also made on male garments regarding their use of silk and gold. Only servants and slaves were not allowed to cover their heads.

The most common material worn was wool, although linen was popular among the Samites. The mantle, usually worn by the upper classes, consisted either of two rectangles sewn together at the sides and shoulders, or a single piece sewn at the side with openings for the head and arms. The woman's cloak known as the palla (the ancient polos), was draped in a variety of styles.

From the 9th Century BC onwards, the Greek influence with its overtones of the Near East and Syria, was very evident in Roman dress - the fold of the palla was drawn over the head when women ventured out of doors (Fig. 15a-b).

From the 2nd Century AD onwards, women wore a long dress, the dalmatic, along with their veils. Later in the 3rd Century AD, the palla under Greek and Assyrian influence was left to fall loosely over the head and body. Generally, Roman women drew a fold of the palla over the head when going outdoors (Fig. 15).



a)



b)

Fig. 15

- a) The palla, the simple Roman veil worn directly on the head. Marble statue of Livia, wife of Augustus (c. 20 AD).
Rome, Vatican Museum
- b) A Roman noble lady folding her palla, (2nd Century AD).
[source: Lister, Margot, History of Costumes, London, (1967), p. 73, Pl. V.I]

Roman Law also strictly regulated the colour and decoration of the palla. White was worn for outdoors only, while purple was for high officials and the dark toga (palla or atra) was for mourning. Borders of purple were allowed on the edges of young men's pallas.

Roman dress code was particularly rigid when it came to religious ceremonies, where virgins wore the white stola (tunic) with the hair arranged in six coils bound by fillets, covered with a square veil. In most sacrificial rites, other women had to only cover the head with the edge of their toga. Complicated hair-styles appeared in the imperial age, especially during the Trajanic period when it was dressed high and elaborately on the forehead. Roman brides wore a flame-coloured veil, the flamma.

With the transfer of the empire's cultural centre from Rome to Byzantium, the love of luxury became even more evident. Although Christianity imposed a simple and sober taste, trade with the Orient imported to the heart of the empire the Asian preference for lively colours and ornamentation. Garments remained essentially the same as in the Roman period, where the cut of the dress hid the body-form under long stiff lines that fell without folds. Sleeves were wide fitting. The upper classes completed this look with a mantle often richly decorated, called a loron.

The veil thrown over the head varied in length between one that ended just below the bosom merely covering the head and shoulders; and one that fell almost to the hem of the dress. Christian brides wore veils of white or violet. From the 4th Century AD onwards, the long dalmatic dress and veil formed the foundation of Eastern and Western European women's dress until the end of the 13th Century AD (Fig. 16).

D) Jewish Hijāb in the Biblical Period

During the centuries between the time of Abraham and the birth of Christ, Jews inhabited different parts of the lands lying between the Nile and the Euphrates. Arab garments were worn by them during their nomadic years in the desert, whether Egyptian, Assyrian, Babylonian or Persian depending on the time and place.

Distinctions had been ordained by the Jews themselves to differentiate their people from the nation among whom they lived, in accordance with their traditions from the time of the Old Testament. The women's veil was one such distinction. It is known that the Jews were the first people to introduce veiling in their text book, although this did not originate from the Old Testament. There exists in it, however, valuable historical information about

veiling. An explanation of the introduction of veiling into the Jewish tradition was given by St. Paul in later times, c. 50 AD:

"A man has no need to cover his head
because man is the image of God and
mirror of His glory whereas woman
reflects the glory of man." (23)

Their custom of veiling married women goes back to the time of Abraham (1857 BC), when he migrated from Ur, Mesopotamia, to Harah in Syria in the middle of the 19th Century BC. When Rebekkah had chosen a wife for Isaac(24), she took a veil and covered herself upon seeing her future husband. She remained unveiled in the company of Abraham's servant who conveyed her to Abraham's house.

Uptil the 8th Century BC, veils identified Jewish women in the ancient Near East in Syria, Palestine and Canaan(25) (Fig. 17), which lasted to the Roman times(26). It was considered immodest for a married woman to go outdoors with an uncovered head, although a work-basket was considered sufficient. It was assumed that uncovered heads belonged to unmarried (virgin) girls, a tradition which dates back from the time of Moses(27) who, in order to differentiate Jews from the peoples with whom they lived, ordained that tassles should be attached to the corners of cloaks or veils.



Fig. 16

Embroidered Byzantine cloak from the painting on the binding of a MS. (5th Century AD).
Rome, Vatican Library

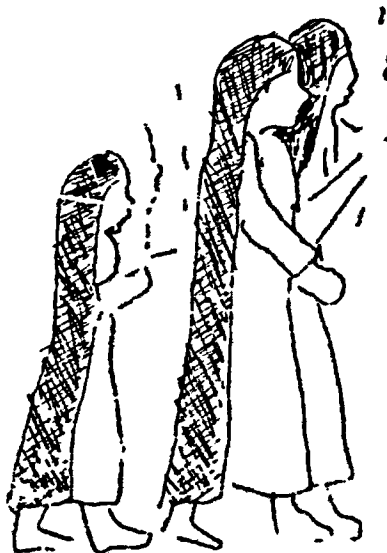


Fig. 17

Judaeen women driven away from the city of Lachish. They wear the smlah, a plain cloak, over the kethuneth, a plain tunic; represented on an Assyrian relief (c. 700 BC).
London, British Museum
[source: Reubens, Alfred, A History of Jewish Costume, London (1967), p. 41]

The Jews derived their costumes from the many different nations among whom they lived under protection, captivity, or whom they had conquered. Their garments, therefore, did not differ to a great extent from those of their neighbours.

The Old Testament gives seven Hebrew words meaning veil, which could be translated as shawl, wrap, or mantle. Over the centuries, the cloak or mantle came to be used as a prayer shawl.

The women's veil for outdoors was the simplah, although men wore the simplah earlier than women. The women's version was distinguishable from the men's by its colour and shape(28).

The ezor (Arabic: īzār) consists of a long roll of cloth, rectangular or shaped, worn as an outer garment by most west Asians. Its counterpart was the Greek himation and the Roman palliam or palla, and served as a blanket as well.

Another version of the veil is the shawl, as mentioned in connection with Rebekkah(29) who wore it when approaching Isaac before her marriage. This veil was a mark of marriage, and was used by Tamara to trick Judah(30). There is also a face veil, probably more ornamental, mentioned in the Song of Solomon(31). Alongside these two veils there is also the kerchief, which covers the head only as a scarf or muffler.

Earliest examples of a Jewish veil are seen on Assyrian reliefs representing Judaeans prisoners from Lachish, taken by Sennacharib in c. 700 BC. The women wear a simplah (cloak, mantle) with a plain border over a plain kethoneth (dress) (Fig. 17).

Other examples of Jewish veils are represented on the mural decoration of the earliest synagogue (3rd Century AD)(32), Dura-Europos. Here, Parthian-like headgear (Pl. XVI) is illustrated, consisting of a head cover like a shawl hung over a prettily decorated turban (Fig. 18), a style which was popularly worn by Near Eastern women of that time. This probably originated from Sumerian art, to be modified by Assyrians and Jews whose coiffures were long and elaborately curled and waved, held in place by a band or kerchief. This was an indication of affluence, coordinated with colours and layers of garments (Fig. 19).

D) Arabia: Aspects of the Hijab in the Jāhiliya Period

By the 5th or 6th Centuries AD, the northern and southern Arabian civilisations (Saba, Ma'in and Himyar) had declined, with the bedouin tribes of the north and centre constantly warring one another and their neighbours. In the Ḥijāz, 'Asīr and Yemen, religious beliefs and practices focused largely upon sacred stones and springs. A pantheon

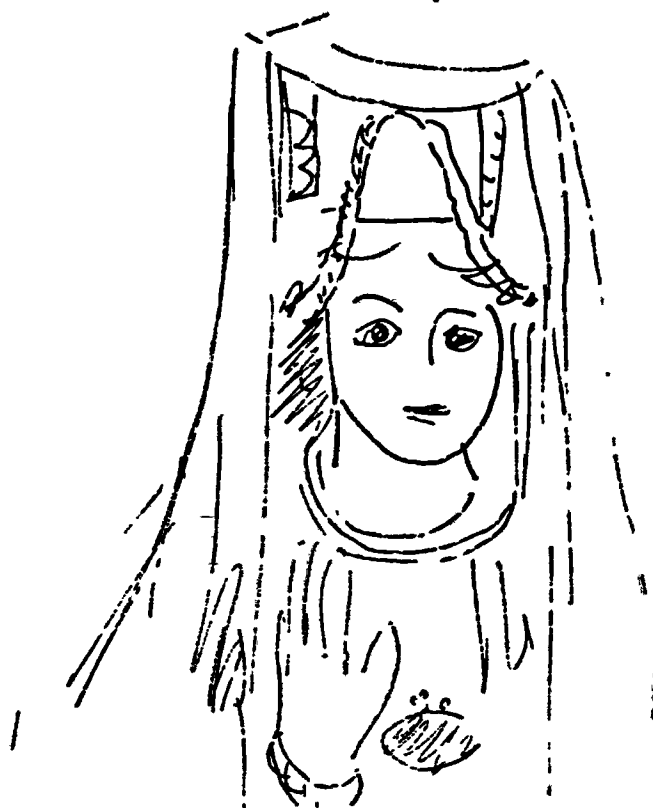


Fig. 18

Turban and cloak - a white veil is worn over a richly decorated head-dress, most probably symbolising marriage; wall painting from the Synagogue of Dura-Europos (250 AD). Damascus, National Museum



Fig. 19

Bithnunaia - a Jewish woman wears a thin veil over a turban; wall painting from the Synagogue of Dura-Europos (250 AD). Damascus, National Museum

of deities was worshiped, and the Ka'ba was a place of pilgrimage in the sacred city of Makka(33), the commercial hub of the area.

The ruling Quraishis of Makka were one such tribe who had been divided into several rival clans. They were the guardians of the Ka'ba and merchant leaders of the Arabs, whose conflicts were retold in many a heroic poem of the Jāhiliya period - Muslim writers continued this tradition in later works.

Christianity and Judaism had already penetrated the Hijāz and Yemen in the preceding centuries. Several Christian and Jewish(34) communities were well established in western Arabia, the best known of which were the Christians of Najran in Yemen and the Jews of Yathrib(35) (al-Madīna). In their travels abroad, many Hijāz merchants were also exposed to traditions of the Mediterranean world. The source of such information is drawn largely from records of the literature and art of Greece, Rome, Assyria and Persia. Poetry of the Jāhiliya provided also considerable knowledge of the social life of Arabs in those pre-Islamic times. Their social life as a whole saw a dramatic change under the influences of a greatly modified social environment plus a variety of foreign cultures.

In Jāhiliya poetry, the oldest examples of which are the Muḥallaqāt (Seven Odes) from the 6th Century AD, a diversity of terminologies describe items of women's apparel. Here, however, there tends to be a difficulty in translating those terms relevant to ḥijāb.

Among the poets who complimented veiled women were:

al-Nābigha al-Dhubī, eulogist of the Christianized kings of the Ghassanids (36), al-Ḥārith (529-69 AD) in Syria and Mesopotamia;

ʿImrūʿ al-Qaṣ, the deposed scion of the royal family of Kinda (37), king of central Arabia, who died in exile (c. 540 AD);

ʿAntarfa ʾIbn Shaddād, the fierce warrior of the Banū ʿAbis tribe;

ʿAdy ʾIbn Ziyād and al-Shanfarī.

These poets described veiled women as honourable ladies. Uncovering or revealing the face was considered abnormal, acceptable only under extreme conditions of emotions or duress, when exhalted or sorrowful, like the poets ʿAntarfa ʾIbn Shaddād, al-Rabīʿ ʾIbn Ziyād and al-Muhalhal ʾIbn Rabīʿ (38).

In tribal wars, well-to-do ladies would often unveil themselves to avoid being taken hostage by the enemy tribe. Unveiled women were slave girls, whose ransom money was minimal if captured.

Among the Prophet's own tribe, the Quraish, veiling was in general, the rule. Historical records(39) show that the citizens of Makka used to dress their unmarried daughters and female slaves in all their finery and parade them unveiled around the Ka'ba to attract possible suitors. Once successful, the women then resumed veiling themselves. Muslim historians such as al-Rāzī(40) described women's public appearance in the Jāhiliya as follows:

"They were walking in public uncovered,
unveiled like common women, nobody
could recognise the distinguished
ladies from their slaves, this is why
Islam ordered them the hijāb."

This reveals that veiling was considered a symbol of honourability - unveiled women degraded themselves to the level of slaves and servants.

Women of Arabia came to know the hijāb in no particular order. More specifically, there existed various terminologies describing veiled ladies such as: al-muḥtashima (the richy veiled lady), barza (the distinguished veiled lady who mingles among men) and saqūṭalqinā (the unveiled but respectable lady). Other words describe various items of hijāb like khimār, murṭ,

burquc, etc, the correct translation of which may be shawl, wrapper, mantle, scarf, muffler, cloak etc. In many instances the meaning of the word has been lost, while in others it is explained by its context. In later writings one is helped by the corresponding text of the Kitāb al-Aghānī and to a certain extent by the Sunna or Ḥadīth, along with early authorities on Islamic history, like Ibn 'Ishāq or al-Ṭabarī and others.

Arabs knew hijāb to be distinctive of tribal society, but were ignorant of the segregation of women. Their history is full of examples of distinguished ladies, either queens, princesses, chieftesses, poets, warriors and traders. Ladies such as Hind bint 'Utba used to attend the annual festival of ʿUkādh as the peer of other distinguished poets, making a grand entrance in a qubba (litter) decorated with coloured flags.

Another prominent lady was Ḥalīma, daughter of the Ghassanid king, who helped her father recover his kingdom in the war named after her. The poet Nābigha praised this day in many of his poems, and the Arabs recall it in their proverbs.

The Assyrians also give mention to the queens of Arabia. Tiglath-Pileser II (745-727 BC), founder of the second Assyrian empire, exacted tribute from Zabibi, queen

of the Arabi land. This could be al-Zabā', or Zanōbfā, or Zaynab in Arabic sources. Another queen mentioned in Assyrian records and in the Bible is Samsi. Again, Tiglath-Pileser II in his ninth year as king in 728 BC, conquered Samsi, Queen of Arabi, and the tribes of Temai (Tayma) and Sabai (Sabaeans) sent him tributes of gold, camels and spices. These tribes lived in the Sinai peninsula and the desert to the north-east(41). Again from Arabic sources, this queen could be Shamsa or Shamsi. Similarly, Sargon II (722-705 BC) records in his annals that he received from Samsi, Queen of Arabia, and from Itamara (Tath-amar), the Sabaen chief, tributes of gold from the mountains, precious stones, ivory, all kinds of herbs, horses and camels(42).

- In about 688 BC, Sennacherib demolished Adumu, Dūmat al-Jandal, the fortress of Arabia, and "carried away to Nineveh the local gods and the queen herself, who was also a priestess"(43). The queen, Telkhunu by name, had allied herself with the rebellious Babylonians against Assyrians, assisted by Haza'el, chief of the Qedar (Assy. Kidri) tribe, whose headquarters were in Palmyra.

The Old Testament also gives numerous referenced to Arabs. Moses married an Arabian woman, the daughter of a

Medianite priest(44); Zipporah, Moses' wife (daughter of Jethro the priest of Median) was in Sinai when Moses received the revelation of Jehovah.

In the Song of Solomon, the Shulammite damsel whose beauty is immortalised in the Song, was probably an Arabian of the Kedar tribe(45).

Balqis, Queen of Sheba (Saba in the Qur'ân), who brought invaluable gifts to the wise King of Israel, was another historical queen of Arabia. Her fame came earlier than Zenūbiā (al-Zabā) of Tadmūr, the beautiful and ambitious wife who in 267 AD, ruled on behalf of her young son under the title of "Queen of the East," and was led captive in golden chains to Rome in 272 AD.

Princesses of Arabian origin are recorded in Hatra's(46) history from the end of the 1st Century BC to the mid 2nd Century AD. Jāhiliya poets like 'Ady Ibn Zayd called this city an Arab city, giving it several Arabic names. Probably the only statue of an Arabian princess is that of Ubal, daughter of Jabal (Pl. IX), who because of her youthful death was immortalised in this statue by her father. Others, such as Samia, Shammia or Abu (Pl. VII + VIII) are commonly found on Hatran inscriptions.

According to history, Shapur I conquered Hatra due to the treachery of the Arab king's daughter, by disclosing to him the secret of the talisman which protected her father's city. No illustration of her remain, because in 363 AD the city is mentioned as having been long in ruins.

1. The Style of the Hijāb

The Arabs were not isolated from the neighbouring civilisations due to trade contacts with them. Despite some influences from abroad, the Arabs retained their old tribal traditions, such as the customary hijāb worn by the affluent tribes. This practice signified honourability. Arabs were familiar with various types of hijāb through their commercial relations, but never practised hijāb in the sense of seclusion or segretation. Their hijāb was of Semitic origin which developed from their cultural environment. Various styles of hijāb were characteristically part of their apparel.

Khadīja, the Prophet's wife, used to wear the khimār, as was customary of the Quraishi ladies of the Jāhiliya. Ibn Ishāq(47) narrates how Khadīja had asked the Prophet to examine the revelation which appeared in her house by drawing down her khimār if it was still present that meant it is an evil spirit, and if it had disappeared (which was

the case) it was then an angel, thereby signifying he was the true prophet.

In other instances, Arab ladies wore a simple hijāb as a sign of defeat, as illustrated on Assyrian reliefs from the time of Tiglat-Pileser III 824-742 BC. This early and rare representation is identical to the arts of the pre-Islamic period, not only in its recording the victory of an Assyrian king, but also as an illustration of a surrendering queen, a style which bore no resemblance to the art of that time. This relief, exhibited in the Assyrian Hall at the British Museum, is one of a series recording the defeat of the Arabs against the Assyrian king Tiglat-Pileser in his ninth pelu (campaign). It shows a veiled woman followed by a procession of camels, who according to Barnett(48), is most probably Samsi, Queen of Arabi. Records of this campaign provide further proof of the events relating to Samsi's ceremony of surrender. The relief also shows how the queen put down her sceptre symbolising her defeat. Looking at her attire with respect to her circumstances, the queen is simply dressed in a plain, long tunic with a shawl having a fringed border draped over the shoulder and hanging down the back (Fig. 20).

From this, it seems that captive Arabs wore the khimār during captivity. Another Assyrian relief from Khorsobad

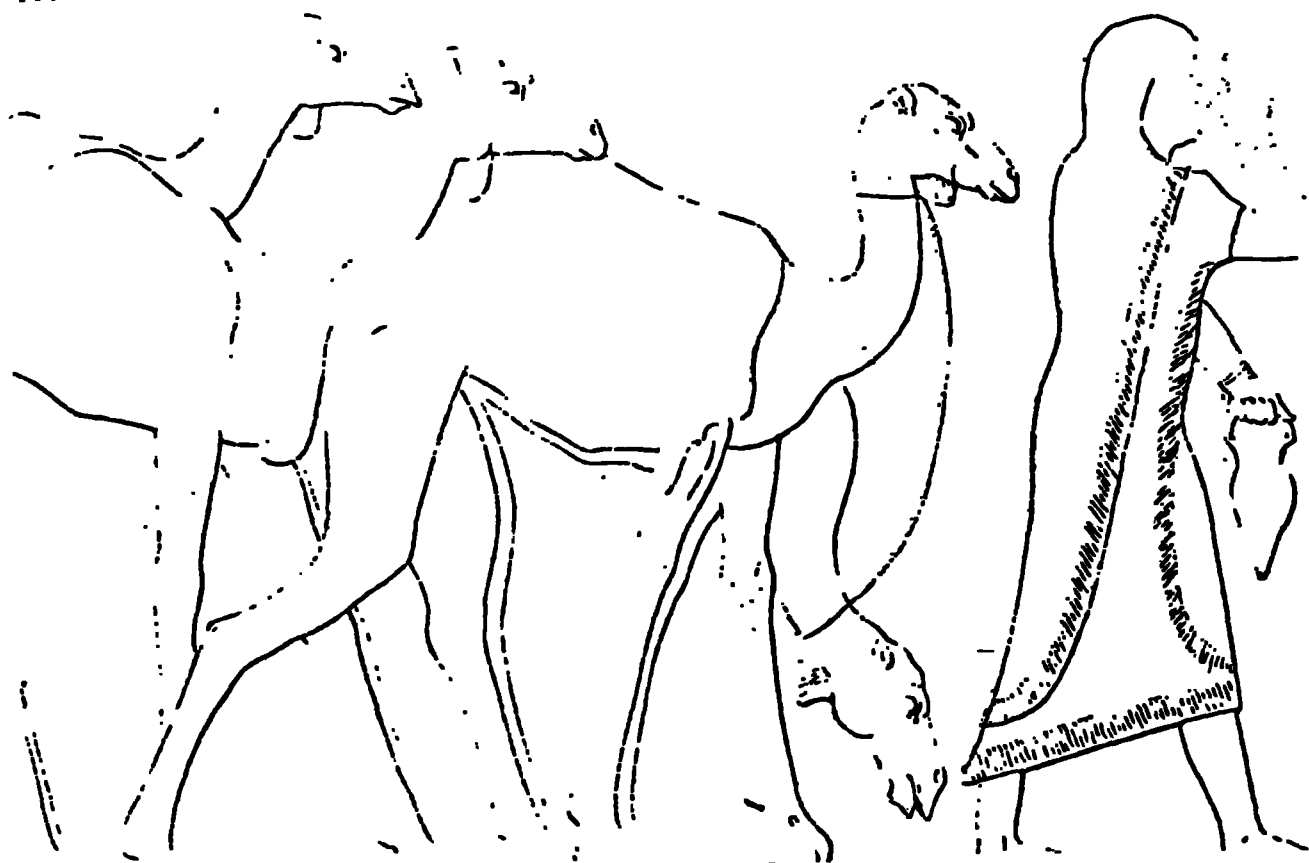


Fig. 20

"The Bedouin Queen", Samsi (or Zabibi) wears a fringed cloak; Assyrian relief dating from the period of Tiglat Pileser II (7th Century BC).
London, British Museum, No. 118901

(7th Century BC), depicts figures identified as Arabs (Fig. who appear to have been captured from a northern city, believed to be Gaza. Again, they wear the same plain long fringed tunics with shawls draped over the shoulder, hanging down the back. A fringed khimār (scarf) is closely wrapped round the head, leaving only the face uncovered.

Arab ladies also veiled themselves when going on pilgrimages or in procession. This has been recorded in the most fascinating sculpture in Palmyra: a bas-relief "in situ" on the cross-beam facing north in the Baʿl temple dated from 32 AD, bearing reliefs representing a procession scene. The three ladies participating in the procession are completely veiled. Evidence of another three women are seen at the other end of the relief (Fig. 21 ^a Pl. XVI). On the back of the camel is the so-called gubba, in which Arab deities were transported(49) (Fig. 21b - Pl. XVI).

This relief reflects the Arab tradition of the pilgrimage procession. It seems that distinguished ladies were covered, and the gubba most probably used to carry Arab gods symbolised the Kaʿba.

In Palmyra and Dur-Europos, a small temple was dedicated to the most important gods of Palmyra - Baʿl and Yarhibol. It was built by the Yamanites who had settled around Palmyra in earlier times, carrying with them their

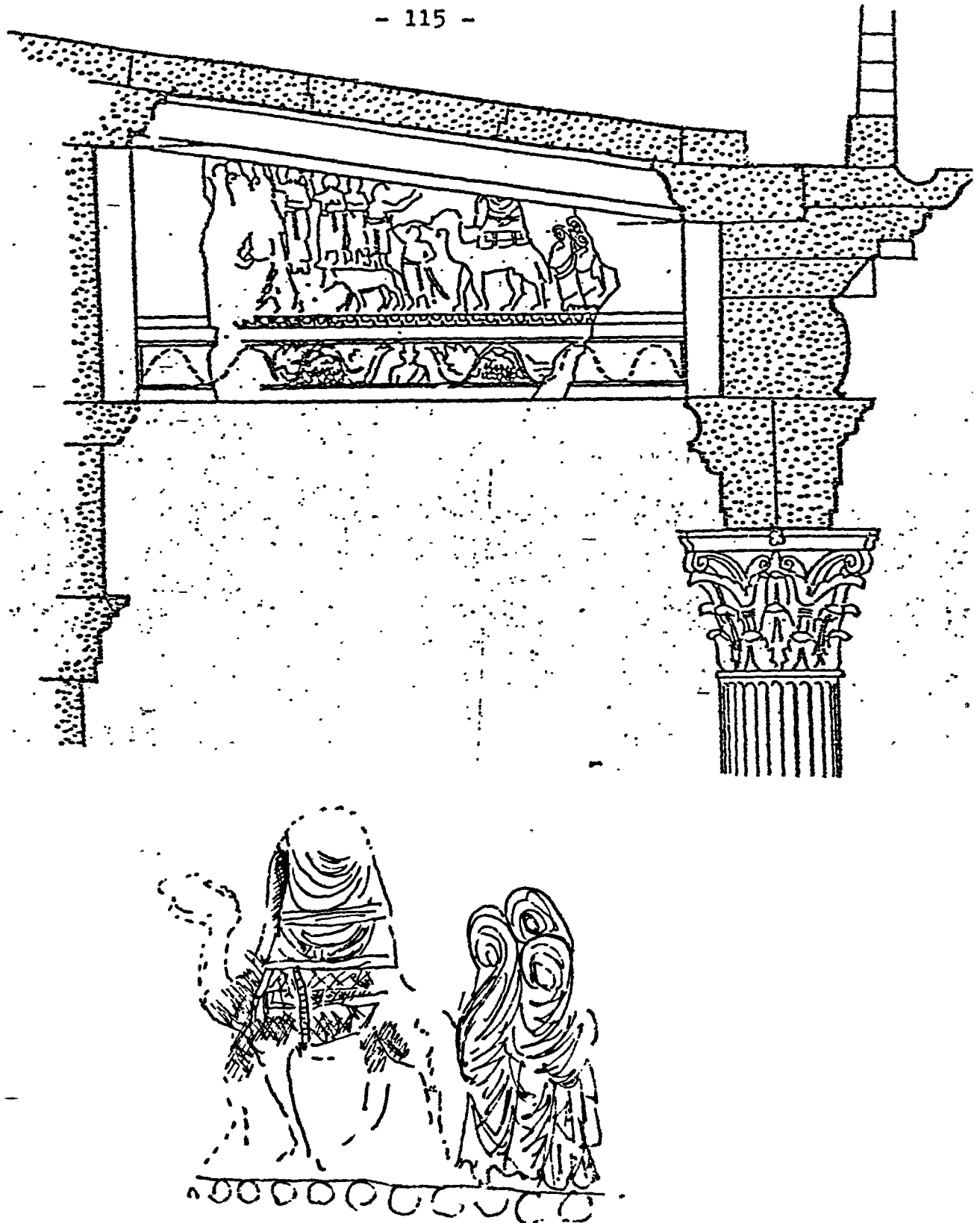


Fig. 21

- a) Bas-relief from the facade of the Ba'al Temple, Palmyra (c. 32 AD)
- b) Detail of the same bas-relief showing fully covered Arab women in a religious procession, the only one of its kind. Note how several layers are worn one over the other covered by an outer garment to fully envelope the body.

traditions among which included covering divine dwellings. Serjeant(50) states that Tuba, an ancient Himyrite king, was pioneered covering the Kaaba in a hijāb. The tradition of completely veiling in religious processions seems then to have stemmed from this, carried right down to Islam. 'Ā'isha later in time, relates how the face was completely covered with a cloak called jilbāb when performing Hajj(51). Several types of hijāb are illustrated in Palmyra, Hatra, and Dura-Europos, but hardly any depict an unveiled woman.

The merging of classical and Arabian costumes is reflected in the art of Dura-Europos, Palmyra and Hatra, whose remarkable series of reliefs illustrate these ancient costumes and present something of a puzzle, since no distinction is made between Arabs, Jews and heathens. It is unnecessary to question whether or not these costumes are in illustrated in their exact form - it suffices to know that they represent the fashion of that time. Two distinct types of dress were popularly worn: the Graeco-Roman draperies known as dalmatica, colobium, clavi, polos, etc. and the Persian dress, tunic, etc. The intermingling of all these represents the fashion worn by the Arabs alongside their original Semitic attire. On the statue of Hatra Dawshafari, we see the Persian style of dress and embroidery complimenting the remarkable head-dress of Assyrian style(Fig. 11a-b - Pl. VII, VIII).

This tendency to borrow fashion styles from outside is further exemplified by the Greco-Roman or Assyrian cloaks Arab women wore, as seen on an early sculpture at Palmyra (Fig. 22 - Pl. XVII). A female tunic is covered by an ankle-length cloak, with the originally Persian head-gear marking social distinction, as represented in Hatran reliefs (Pl. VII, VIII, IX).

There were women who covered the head with their cloaks (most women did this then) as depicted on early reliefs at the time when the Arabs began to settle in Palmyra. Some women, especially those with the melon coiffure, substituted a heavy fringed cloak for the veil. This was thrown around the shoulders, and may have been of Parthian origin.

From 150 AD onwards, fashionable ladies wore hair ornaments as seen in Dura-Europos and Palmyra (Fig. 23 - Pl. XVIII) on the sculpture of Tama. This corresponds with the Qur'ānic description of tabarruj al-jāhiliya.

Another interesting hijāb representation is found in Palmyra on early gravestone, showing a figure or woman behind a curtain (Fig. 24 - Pl. XVII, XIX). This indicates curtains were widely used in the Jāhiliya time and reflecting the Qur'ānic verse:

"Ask them from behind a curtain"



Fig. 22 A Palmyran woman dressed in a full length-cloak, on a gravestone from Palmyra (1st Century AD).
Paris, Louvre



Fig. 23 Tabarruj al-Jāhiliya - the bust of the richly dressed 'Tamma' with a heavily embroidered garment; Palmyra (c. 150 AD).
London, British Museum



Fig. 24 A woman standing behind a sitara (curtain); funerary plaque
from Palmyra (1st Century AD).
Copenhagen, Ny Carlsberg Glyptotek, No. 1159

2. The Items of the Ḥijāb at this Period

Although it is difficult to merge the exact illustration to the exact piece of ḥijāb, we understand that the ḥijāb items were a combination of wrappers and head-gear. The wrappers were cloaks such as jilbāb(51) or murt(53) that enveloped the whole body for out of doors. Sometimes women enveloped themselves in a large mantle called shamla(54) shared by both men and women alike, or the cloak-like murt(55) designed like the jilbāb, but worn by women only.

The jilbāb is described as an īzār(56) too, a wrapper similar to the murt but enveloping the body from the waistline down only(57). Traditionally the īzār is worn by men only, but according to Jāhiliya poetry, women shared it as well(58). The women's īzār, however, seems to be different in style made of rakh.ū (soft) material with .muṣḥalaṣha (fringed) border, worn well tied round the body(59).

Both shamla and murt are variations of milḥafa(60) which is also a cloak used to give warmth to the body. It is usually made of yellow or red thick material mostly wool, popularly used among the bedouins(61).

The milā'a, is yet another variation of cloaks and wrappers mentioned in Jāhiliya poetry. This time it

comprises of a wide, long wrapper with train(62), made from soft material in plain white or yellow colours. Sometimes milā'as are also patterned(63).

Another wrapper called ḡabā'a(64), is most probably the nearest variation to the cloak. It is made of coarse, thick woolen material(65), striped mostly in brown, black and white colours(66). It is similar to the burda(67) in its cut and material but comparatively smaller in size, worn again by both men and women, whereas the burda is for men only(68).

As a head cover, women wore the khimār(69), which is a scarf or kerchief made of thin cloth, manufactured in Yemen or Uman, Bahrain, Syria, Mesopotamia or Persia, sometimes even India.

The khimār comprised of any long piece of cloth that covered the head, leaving the face bare with one loose end on the shoulder. Qinā(70) is the same as khimār in its style but smaller. The burqu(71) is a face cover, which either had wide eye-openings called najlāwān(72) or narrow ones called wuswās(73).

Another kind of khimār is the naṣīf(74), which is a thin cloth khimār, made from a large soft piece of cloth covering the whole body and face. The poet al-Nābigha(75) wrote beautiful descriptions on the naṣīf worn by the wife of the Arab king, al-Nu'mān ibn al-Mundhir.

The last items of hijāb are the liṭḥām and niqāb(76), both of which are a scarf worn to cover the nose or part of the face in public.

This survey shows that the hijāb was the most _distinctive custom of Arabian women. Evidence of Jāhiliya poets supported by archaeological findings, shows that the hijāb in Arabia was an ancient tradition going back to the early times of Saba, Himyar and Main. Literary sources of the Jāhiliya Arabs show that veiling signified honour according to the tribal system which ruled Arab life in the Peninsula. Women who wore the veil were completely honourable and therefore chaste. Unveiling was only obligatory for slaves, poor and common women.

This practice can be seen among the ethical customs of the Quraish tribe, the wealthiest and leading tribe, who inherited the Semitic traditions. Other tribes followed their suit.

The Arabs as traders had close contacts with contemporary civilisations and were therefore influenced by what they wore, dressing either in bedouin attire in the desert or in Graeco-Roman and Persian attire when in town.

F) Characteristics of the Hijāb in the Pre-Islamic Period

Examining the hijāb in the arts of the ancient Near East in the pre-Islamic period led us to the following major points which, we believe, may have determined the hijab in early Islamic times. First, we noticed that the hijāb was known for a long time before Islam in two forms: one as clothing (especially headgear) and the other as seclusion. Examples of the former can be seen in Mesopotamia where the exclusive turbans and cloaks (from 3rd millenium BC) could be an early indication of hijāb which later (7th Century BC) determined women's appearance by Assyrian Law. Assyrian reliefs carried rare examples of veiled Assyrian ladies. Likewise, the Romans (3rd Century BC) also issued decrees(77) restricting women's clothes and movements outdoors, probably due to Assyrian influence.

While clothing such as cloaks and mantles featured widely in these civilisations, the Persian form of hijāb involved seclusion. Women were segregated in private houses and palaces in harīms, besides wearing specific headgear and cloaks. This practise became particularly famous in the Achaemenid court(78). Such seclusion was not new in ancient civilisations - the Babylonians were the first to seclude virgins to the gods in their temples. This was probably the origin of the harīm. The Jews(79) enjoined hijāb among

their women in the meaning of chastity and respect. Various texts relevant to hijāb in the Old Testament from the 19th Century BC support this theory. Christians, who inherited the hijāb from the Jews, regarded it in the light of respect for women.

In short, it is uncertain whether or not particular people were responsible for introducing the hijāb. Headgear and numerous wrappers were already widely used in ancient civilisations, symbolising social standing, distinction, wealth and honour. The meaning of hijāb was the idea behind those symbols. Henceforth, it can be assumed that nearly all pre-Islamic nations were familiar with and applied the hijāb, according to their religion, tradition or society. They practised its use in one way or another.

Among these nations were the Arabs. If it is assumed that Semitic traditions brought about the introduction of the hijāb, it can then be safely said that the Jews, Arabs and Assyrians pioneered its use. In Arabia, birth-place of Islam, the hijāb had already been previously used to symbolise honour, in accordance to tribal traditions. Female seclusion was, however, not part of this traditions, where mingling freely between the sexes was common practise. Women could moved freely in market places, compete as poets against their male counterparts, converse with men, and

fought in tribal wars. All these events were carried out of course while wearing the ḥijāb. I do not see that Arabs were influenced by any other people or civilisation - they had their own traditions. All illustrations of Arab women show them with in the ḥijāb, while most Assyrian, Persian or Roman women are seen unveiled. To conclude this, it can therefore be said that the ḥijāb was introduced into Islam through Arabia. We can ask ourselves, however, what form of ḥijāb lasted in Islam, and what is the difference between the ḥijāb of the Jāhiliyya and early Islamic period? This will be answered in the next chapter.

* * *

NOTES ON CHAPTER II

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- (2) Ruthven, Malise, Islam in the World, Penguin Books (1984), p. 40.
- (3) On the other hand the Islamic point of view is that the "Qur'ān -accused the Jews and Christians of corrupting the text of the original revelations made to them and claimed that Iālām represented the final truth", Malise, *op. cit.*, p. 118.
- (4) Hitti, Philip K., History of the Arabs from the Earliest Times to the Present (8th edition), London (1963), p. 67.
- (5) Ukasha', Tharwat, al-Fann al-^GIrāqī, The Art of Ancient Mesopotamia, Sumer, Babylonia and Assyria (Arabic Text), Beirut (no date), p. 200.
- (6) Encyclopaedia of World Art, Vol. III, p. 20.
- (7) *ibid*, Vol. I, p. 511.
- (8) In further detail, the Assyrian law proceeds: "A person who notices such a woman as not obliged by law, is liable to call her to the court where she will be punished by fifty lashes and by pouring bitumen over her head". G.R. Driver and J.C. Miles, The Assyrian Law, Oxford (1935) pp. 406-8.
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- (10) al-Jadir, Walid, al-Harāf wa al-sinācat fī Ashūr (The Crafts in Assyria.) (Arabic Text), Baghdad University. publications (1972), p. 272.
- (11) Ukasha', *op. cit.*, p. 12, Pl. 13. Madhloom, *op. cit.*, p. 73, Pl. LXIIV.
- (12) Herodotus, The History of Herodotus, English translation by G. Rawlinson, 4 vols., London (1879), Book II, Ch. 102.
- (13) Old Testament, Chapter II, "Book of Esther", verse 12. Some consider Esther's practice as a non Jewish one, written perhaps on an historical basis ca. 3rd Century BC to defend the keeping of the Feast of Purim; cf. G.H. Box, Judaism in the Greek Period, Oxford (1932), pp. 223-4.

- (14) Old Testament, Esther 11.8:
 "So it came to pass, when the king's commandment and his decree was heard, and when many maidens were gathered together unto Shushan the palace, to the custody of Hegai, that Esther was brought also into the king's house, to the custody of Hegai, keeper of women". In the British Museum, in a private collection, there is one of the finest of the seals engraved with busts of high dignitaries, among whom is Vahuden Shapur, who bore the title of "Eran anbarepat" (Chief of the Imperial Household). Girshman, Roman, Iran, Parthian and Sassanians, trans. S. Gilbert and J. Emmons, T. and H. Publications, France (1962), p. 241, Pl. 294.
- (15) Goetz, Herman, "The History of Persian Costume" an article in Pope (ed.), Survey of Persian Art, Vol. II, Ch. 54, p. 2227.
- (16) Naqshi, Rajab: a rock some three miles north of Persepolis with bas-relief of Ardashir I and Shapur I;
 Scarce, Jennifer: "The Development of Women's Veils in Persia and Afghanistan Costume" (1975), Vol. 9, pp. 4-14.
- (17) Pur, Jalil Zia, Pa shak-i Zanani Iran (Persian Female Costumes from Antiquity) (Persian text), Teheran (no date), p. 164.
- (18) Sykes, Sir Percy, The History of Persia, London (1930), 3 vols., Vol. I, p. 172.
- (19) Lister, Margot, History of Costume, An Illustrated Survey from Ancient Times to the Twentieth Century, London (1967), pp. 35-8;
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- (20) Lister, op . cit., p. 68.
- (21) - . Encyclopaedia of World Art, Vol. 2, p. 22.
- (22) In 195 AD, Cato had opposed in vain Lex Oppia (215 AD) restricting female dress and jewellery;
 Grant, Sir Michael, History of Rome, London (1978), p. 370;
 al-'Aqād, 'Abbās Mahmūd, al-Marā' . ff al-Qur'ān (Women in the Qur'ān), Beirut (1969), p. 63.

- (23) Corinthians, Chapter XI, verse 7-10; Deuteronomy, Chapter XXII, verse 5: "Thewoman shall not wear that which pertaineth unto a man".
- (24) Genesis, 24:65.
- (25) al-Muzālyan, Abdalrahmān, al-Aziyā' al-Falastīniya (Arab-Palestinian Folkloric Costumes). p. 24.
- (26) Reuben, Alfred, A History of Jewish Costume, London (1967), pp. 5-8; cf. also ibid., Pl. 8, Judean prisoners represented on a relief from Lachish (c. 700 BC), now in the British Museum, London.
- (27) Yarwood, Doreen, Encyclopaedia of World Costume, London (1978), p. 256.
- (28) Myers, J. M., The Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible, U.S.A. (1962), 4 vols. in one, p. 747.
- (29) Marmorstein, G., "The Veil in Judaism and Islam", Journal of Jewish Studies, Vol. V (1954), pp. 1-11.
- (29) Old Testament, Genesis 25:65, Isaac meets Rebekkah c. 1857 BC:
"For she had said unto the servant, what man is this that walketh in the field to meet us? And he the servant had said, it is my master: therefore she took a veil and covered herself".
- (30) Old Testament, Genesis 39:14, Tamar deceives Judah c. 1729 BC:
14) And she put her widow's garment off and covered her with a veil and wrapped herself, and sat in an open place which is by the way to Tim-nath; for she saw that She-lah was grown, and she was not given unto him to wife.
15) When Judah saw her, he thought her to be a harlot, because she had covered her face.
19) And she arose, and went away and laid by her veil from her, and put on a garment of her widowhood.
- (31) Songs of Solomon, 1:4:
The King brought me into his chambers.
I am black, but comely
O ye daughters of Jerusalem
As tents of Kedar
As the curtains of Solomon
- (32) The court of the synagogue with its original paintings and ceiling was restored by Mr. Pearson in the Museum of Damascus, Rostovtzeff, m., Dura-Europos and its Arts, Oxford (1938), "Jewish Synagogue", p. 101.

- (33) Hitti, *op. cit.*, Vol. 1, p. 45.
- (34) Ali, Jawad, al-Mufasssal fi tarikh al- Arab (History of the Arabs before Islam), 9 vols., 2nd ed., Beirut and Baghdad (1976), p. 631.
- (35) Lutfy, Abdalwahab Yahija, al-Arab fi al-Usur al-Qadima (The Arabs of Ancient Time), Beirut (1978), p. 184;
Yathrib, Yathrippa, ~~lag~~ some 300 miles north of Makka.
Ptolemy Geographia, ed. F. A. Carolus, Leipzig (1887), Book VI, Ch. 7, p. 31.
- (36) "The Ghassanids, descendants of south Arabian tribes, settled by end of the 3rd Century AD. Banu Chassan were Christian Arabs. Their civilisation was a mixture of Arabic, Syrian and Greek elements. The poet al-Nabegha was in the Court of al-Harith. In 613-4 AD, the Sassanid King Khusrou ^{defeated} the Jafnid Dynasty," Hitti, *op. cit.*, p. 78.
- (37) "Kinda was the first attempt in Central Arabia to unite a number of tribes around the central authority ... Imru' al-Qais was descendant of royal kind line. In 480 AD, he made attempts to regain his heritage," al-Ya'qūbī, Tarikh, Leiden (1883), Vol. 1, p. 251.
- (38) al-Jabūrī, Yaḥya, "al-Mansūjāt ff al-Shi'r al-Jāhilīy", Bulletin of the Faculty of Humanities, Qatar University, Doha (1984), Vol. 7, p. 293.
- (39) Levy, Reuben, The Social Structure of Islam, Cambridge (1954) p. 124;
al-Azraqī, Tarikh Makka, Wustefield, Leipzig (1858), Vol. 2, p. 4;
- (40) al-Rāzī, Tafsīr al-Kabīr, Cairo (1307 AH), 8 vols., Vol. 5, p. 249;
Tabarī, Annales, Leiden (1879), Vol. 12, p. 32.
- al-Jahiz ^{report} about unveiled females in pre-Islamic Arabia: in Epistle of Singing Girls ed. AFL Beeston (1980), pp. 10-13.
Tabarī, Annales, Leiden (1879), Vol. 12, p. 32.
- (41) Hitti, *op. cit.*, p. 37;
Afifi, Abdallah, al-Mar'a al- Arabia (The Arab Woman), 2 vols., Beirut (1945), Vol. 1, p. 117.
- (42) Musil, Alois, Arabia Deserta, New York (1927), p. 478;
Hitti, *op. cit.*, p. 38.
- (43) Musil, *op. cit.*, p. 483.
- (44) Old Testament, Exodus, 3:1, 18:1 - 1-2, 18:10-12.

- (45) Old Testament, King SI, 3:9:
 "So they sought Abishag, O Shlumammite and brought her to the King"
- Song of Solomon, 6:13:
 "Return, return of Shulamite
 return, return that we may look upon thee
 what will ye see in Shulamite."
- (46) al-Shamis, Majid, al-Ḥadīṣ Madīnat al-Shamis (Hatra, City of Sun), Baghdad (1968), p. 10;
 Basmachi, Faraj, Dalīl al-Mathaf, Baghdad (1960), p. 270;
- (47) 'Ibn 'Ishāq reported that Khadija examined the revelation by drawing her khimār (veil), Sirat Ibn 'Ishāq, Rabat (1976), p. 114.
- (48) Barnet, R. D. and Falkner, M., The Sculptures of Ashur Nasir - Appl. II, from central and south palaces at Minrud, British Museum, London (1962), Introduction.
- (49) For the qubba, see Drivers, H.J., The Religion of Palmyra, Brill (1970), p. 11. For the complete covering of the face: "The complete covering of the face with a veil used as a cloak seems unique in Near Eastern art"; Colledge, Malcom, The Art of Palmyra, London (1976), p. 141.
- (50) Serjeant sites that according to al-Āzraqy, the Ka-ba was first covered by Tubba-kings of Yemen with wasīla striped cloth and hibra and asab, long before Islam, Islamic Textiles, Ch. XV, p. 120.
- (51) Ibn Hishām, op. cit., Vol. IV, p. 321.
- (52) Lane Lexicon, Vol. I, p. 140.
 Dozy, sup-aux. dic., p. 122.
- (53) Most of the lexicons agree on the murt being a garment made of wool or a hairy material. Bedouin women used to wear an īzār of green or perhaps grey colour.
 Ibn Saīd; Mukḥṣaṣ, Vol. 4, p. 77.
 "murt", Tāj al-Arūs and Qāmūs al-Muḥīt.
 Dozy, op. cit., p. 404.
 Lane, op. cit., p. 2709.
- (54) Lisān al-'Arab, described shamla as a piece of cloth which has a khaml or wabur (hairy surface), mostly of wool used to envelope the body.

- (55) murt murahal is an over-garment or cloak with long train, decorated with caravan motives. Al-Zawzanī, Sharḥ al-Muʿallaqāt (Commentary on the Seven Odes), Cairo (1925), p. 24.
- (56) "īzār", Lisān al-ʿArab and Ṣaḥīḥ al-Lughā. Dozy, op. cit., p. 24.
- (57) īzār muḥaddab (fringed īzār), Dozy, op. cit., p. 28.
- (58) al-Jabūrī, op. cit., p. 263.
- (59) Dozy, op. cit., p. 26.
- (60) Ibn Saʿyda, al-Mukḥaṣṣaṣ, Vol. 1, p. 76.
- (61) "milḥafa is mantle", Dozy, op. cit., p. 399.
- (62) Diwān Imrūʿ al-Qaīs, rev. by Abn al-Fadhīl Muḥammad, Cairo (1958), p. 370;
al-Zawānī, op. cit., p. 24.
- (63) al-Baladīrī, Aḥmad Ibn Yahyā, ʿAnsāb al-Ashraf, rev. by Muḥammad Ḥamid Allāh, Cairo (1956), Vol. 4, p. 22.
- (64) al-Jabūrī, op. cit., p. 299.
- (65) "abā", Encyclopaedia of Islam, Vol. I, p. 1;
Dozy, op. cit., p. 292.
- (66) al-Jabūrī, op. cit., p. 303.
"aba" Lisān al-ʿArab.
- (67) "burd", ibid
"īzār is burda", Dozy, op. cit., p. 24.
- (68) Serjeant, op. cit., p. 130.
- (69) Lyall, al-Mufaddaliyat, Vol. , p. 327.
Dozy, op. cit., p. 169.
- (70) "khimār is qinā", Lisān al-ʿArab, Vol. 4, p. 257.
- (71) "nīqāb is burquʿ", Dozy, op. cit., p. 424.
Ibn Salām, al-Ḡharīb, mss. Iraqi Museum Library, no. 1628, p. 7.
- (72) Dozy, op. cit., p. 342.

- (73) 'Ibn Saiyda, Mukhasass, Vol. 4, p. 39.
- (74) "khinār is sabb and nasīf", Ṣaḥīh al-Lughā.
- (75) al-Jaburī, opp. cit., p. 282.
Lyall, Mufaddaliyat, opp. cit., p. 204.
- (76) ^{Litham} "Lizam is a scarf of veil worn by Arab women in public to cover (لِثَامٌ) the nose, mouth and neck as a protection against sand,"
Dozy, opp. cit., p. 398.
'Ibn Saiyda, Mukhasass, Vol. 4, p. 38.
- (77) "Lexoppia" Grant, opp. cit., p. 370.
Gibbon, The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire, ed. Bury, London (1898), Vol. V.
- (78) "Chief of the Imperial Household" has been illustrated on a seal.
Pl. 294, Girshman, Iran, p. 241.
- (79) Judgement on the daughters of Zion, c. 740 BC, Isaiah 3:16:
3:16 "Moreover the Lorth saith, because the daughters of Zion are naughty and walk with stretched forth necks and wanton eyes, walking and mincing as they go, and making a tinkling with their feet."
3:17 "Therefore the Lord will smite with a scab the crown of the head of the daughters of Zion and the Lord will discover their secret parts."
3:18 "In that day the Lord will take away the bravery of their tinkling ornaments about their feet and their cauls, and their round tires like the moon."
3:10 "The chains and bracelets and the nufflers"
etc. to the end of verse 23.

CHAPTER III

THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE HIJĀB FROM THE EARLY ISLAMIC PERIOD TO THE END OF THE 'UMMAYAD PERIOD

A) Features and Styles

1. Material
2. Colours

B) The Specifications of the Hijāb

1. Measurements
2. Sleeves
3. The 'Ihrām Garment
4. Decent Garment
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C) Some Archaeological Evidence from the 'Ummayad Period

CHAPTER III

THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE HIJĀB FROM THE EARLY ISLAMIC PERIOD TO THE END OF THE 'UMAYYAD PERIOD

With the birth of Islam in Arabia, the hijāb (alongside the jilbāb, khimār, burquc, murṭ, lithām) remained favourable among the distinguished ladies of Hijāz, including for one Khadija, Mohammed's first wife, or Hind, daughter of 'Utbaī. Its introduction to the Prophet's wives came through the Qur'ān, which requested them to stay indoors(1), draw a sitāra(2) (curtain) and let down their jilbāb and khimār. In so doing, these women came to be known as 'ummahāt al-Mū'minīn(3), a privilege they well merited. Similarly, ordinary Muslim women were advised to guard their appearance(4) and lengthen their jilbāb and khimār(5), to enable them to continue moving freely in public - the former styles were regarded indecent. Islam was not intended to prevent women from undertaking those social activities previously practised during the Jāhiliya.

Such guidelines in public behaviour and appearance originated from the Prophet's Ḥadīths (the Qur'ān itself does not refer to them at any point), which instruct women when, where and how the hijāb should be worn, whether on sacred

occasions, during prayer or on pilgrimages, giving mention also to the measurements of the garments, thus standardising their shape and style.

A) Features and Styles

Under Islamic Law, few modifications were made on the original Jāhiliya garments, with exception to the ḥijāb itself and the dos and donts of men's attire. Simplicity and modesty were stressed to create the jilbāb and khimār, inexpensive enough for any Muslim woman from any walk of life to purchase. The elaborate Jāhiliya garments(6) symbolised wealth, power and position among the elite, in contrast to these new Islamic styles. To set another example to the masses, the Prophet himself insisted that rather than discard his slightly worn clothes, ʿĀʾisha was to simply mend them with patches. This new and more modest trend continued right up to the Rāshidūn era.

Three basic items sufficiently provided sitir (modesty): the diraʿ (dress), the ʾizār (wrap) and the khimār (veil), all made of plain materials. These forms of ḥijāb were derived by comparing their pre-Islamic evidence with the relevant Ḥadīth and Sunna, since little archaeological evidence was available to prove otherwise.

To give an example of this, one Sunna(7) describes Aisha's prayer garments:

"She used to pray with three pieces only, dira, khimār and īzār; she used to envelope her body with her īzār alongside dira and khimār(8)."

Another example(9) relates how the Prophet presented his īzār to a girl whom he saw praying without a khimār in Aisha's house, and asked her to make two out of the material contained therein. With that, Aisha was reported to have replied, "The girl should pray not but with a dira and khimār."

In conclusion, it can therefore be said that hijab includes the:

dira sābigh - a long, wide dress with long sleeves that covers the whole body ;

khimār and īzār, or any piece of cloth which can replace the khimār such as an īzār (one īzār makes two khimārs), or any other covering such as the jilbāb.

All these articles need not necessarily be used - the head and body, for example, could be covered with the jilbāb or malḥafa only. Convenience, however, involves the use all to ensure easier movement during prayer services(10).

With regard to how the hijab was actually worn, this was inherited down from the pre-Islamic Jāhiliya days, where it consisted of several pieces of material worn in a variety of ways. One Sunna specifically and elaborately describes these different ways, the verbs and adjectives of which illustrates the shape of the hijāb:

ta-da-ruḡ is a wide, long dress with long sleeves, falling to the feet and covering the whole body (Fig. 25 - Pl. XX).

ta-wā-shuḥ is derived from wishāḥ, the long scarf which envelopes the body tightly. Wishāh is also the embroidered material covering the body tightly.

ta-jal-bub is the verb of jilbāb, a dark cloak-like covering or mantle or any cover that conceals the body entirely. Mu-ta-jal-bib could be clouds, describing shapeless dark coverings, or gathering storm clouds(11) (Fig. 21a-b - Pl. XVIII).

ta-ḡ-jur(12) - "Ā'isha describes the Anṣār's reaction to hijāb as "ta-ḡ-jarna", their murūt (cloaks) were twisted on the head like turbans. ʿIctijār stems from maḡjir(13), clothes made of Yemeni fabric, shorter than ridāʿ and bigger than qināc. The ʿictijār is a garment similar to ʿil-ti-ḡāf, used as a headcover to reveal the

chin only, as with the turban. ʿIctijār could also refer to dark clothes - the Prophet entered Makka musta-jī-ran (in a black turban) (Fig. 23 - Pl. XVIII). He forbade women to wear the ḡamāma (turban) or even twist the khimar twice over the head lest it resemble the ḡamāma, a garment typical of the Jahiliya times(14).

ī-ḡ-tī-tāf describes how a made-to-measure, long sleeved suit or coat of thick cloth is worn. This could be either of Persian or possibly bedouin origin (Figs. 25 and 26, Plate XX).

īl-tī-fāḡ describes how the body is wrapped with any soft cloth, usually silk. This could also describe the women's milfāḡ(15). This enveloped the body in pleats, and was bound firmly round the body, held together with the hands only to provide free movement for the wearer. Various illustrations from Palmyra depict this garment (Fig. 27 - Pl. XXI).

tas-bīl describes how the covering falls loosely down the body without binding. This is impossible with regular cloaks or mantles, but is applicable to long, wide cloaks or light coats where the sleeves hold the garment firmly on the shoulders (Figs. 20, 22 - Pl. XVII).



Fig. 25

Tadaru: a woman from Saba enveloping her body in tadaru style. This could be ititāf too. Sabaeen Stele (5th Century BC).
London, British Museum



Fig. 26

Coat of a Persian merchant; reliefs representing Median nobles on the Eastern stairway leading to the Apadana, Persepolis (c. 380 BC).
[source: Girshman, Iran, London (1964), Pl. 209]

1 ikh-ti-mār describes how the khimār is worn by winding a long, soft cloth around the head and neck, and throwing one side of it on the back and drawing the other over the bosom. Islamic Law condemned the practice of some women who misinterpreted this by not covering their bosom. A sign of nobility was to perform ikḥtimār correctly, a privilege which ‘Umar supposedly forbade his slave women lest they may be mistaken for noblewomen(16). Knowing now of the importance of this piece of cloth in decently covering the upper body, it is not surprising why it came to be chosen to represent the hijāb in the Qur’ān(17).

ta-qa-nuc is an additional form of covering or hijāb practised alongside the use of the khimār and dira (the main garments)(18). Here, the head is covered by either drawing down part of the jilbāb or using a separate cloth like a scarf or shawl. Elderly women when at home, only drew down their qināc while still wearing the khimār and ridā’(19). Qināc is a veil which may be removed in the privacy of the home (Figs. 28, 29 - Pls. XXII, XXIII).



Fig. 27

Women folding their cloaks in the 'iltifā' style. Stone relief from Palmyra (1st half of the 1st Century AD). Palmyra, Museum



Fig. 28

A girl, Hada, throwing her veil over the shoulder in the 'ikhtimār style; funerary plaque, Palmyra (125 AD). Copenhagen, Ny Carlsberg Glyptotek, No. 1155

īn-tī-qāb is similar to qināc with the addition of eye-slits required for seeing through. This description, therefore, suggests that the niqāb was made of thick cloth, while the qināc was of a thinner one (Fig. 30 - Pl. XXIV).

1. Materials

With practically no archaeological evidence available, it is uncertain whether or not most of the materials used for these garments were woven in Hijaz. There does, however, exist some historical, literary and Sunna evidence which suggests that the fabrics and ready-made clothes were either imported from distant Mesopotamia, Syria, Persia, India and Egypt or neighbouring Yemen, Oman and Bahrain. Only a few very basic raw materials were available in Hijāz itself, which facilitated the local manufacture of some coarse wollen fabrics(20). Sunna sources cite that the local women most probably did the weaving, just as Bukhārī(21), relates how a woman from Madina presented a shamla to the Prophet, handmade and embroidered especially for him.

Other materials such as linen, wool, silk and camel hair were all imported from nearby regions - cotton presumably from India; silk and gilded clothes were imported to Yemen(22) from the Far East and then transported to Hijaz.



Fig. 29

A Palmyran woman holding the sides of her veil together in the 'ikhtimār and taqanu' manners; funerary relief from Palmyra (late 2nd Century AD). Paris, Louvre, No. 21383



Fig. 30

Aha, daughter of Iabdelah, shown twisting the sides of her veil and throwing it over her shoulder in a nearly 'intiḡāb manner; relief from Palmyra (149 AD). Copenhagen, Ny Carlsberg Glyptotek, No. 2794

Before making a more detailed analysis of the materials used for hiḡāb, it is necessary first to examine two very important terms, wāṣifa and kāshifa, which regularly appear in Sunna texts. In one of the Prophet's Ḥadīths, women are advised to wear a ghilāla underneath or with their qubāṭī dress which was wāṣif (it revealed the body outlines) (23).

‘Umar was even firmer than the Prophet in dealing with this qubāṭī - he prohibited any Muslim women from wearing it altogether. With this ban, one story relates how upon being told his wife wore one as well without revealing her body, ‘Umar replied if it was not wāṣifa then it was kāshifā (24) - if it is not transparent (which most probably it was not) it was then too tight fitting. Hence, a wāṣif dress is a tight one and ṡawb kāshif a transparent one, neither of which were favoured under Islamic Law.

In the Jāhilīya times, the Arabs had ritualistically covered the sacred Kaḡba with a qubāṭī or Yemeni cloths, a custom which lasted upto the eras of ‘Umar and ‘Uṡmān. Al-Maqrīzī (25) relates how a Coptic governor of Egypt had sent the Prophet a gift of twenty Coptic ready-made garments made of very fine, luxurious material. Upon receiving this, the Prophet only permitted its use as long as a thick garment was worn underneath as well - the body outlines were easily defineable either by its being transparent or tight-

fitting. Again, 'Umar took no chances with these Coptic garments and restricted their use altogether. Qubātīs similar to these, were popularly worn in the Jāhiliya times, made of luxurious, fine, white Egyptian linen(26), as mentioned in many a poem of Zuhair Ibn Abī Salma(27). Archaeologically, however, the qubātī (Fig. 31) was a tapestry(28) sent annually by the Egyptians to cover the Ka'ba with. It had been known in Egypt since 1500 BC, and lasted up till Roman and Christian times. With the rise of Islam, and in order to discourage its further use, 'Amr Ibn al-ʿĀs(29), Governor of Egypt, taxed his subjects one Coptic dress each, which according to Muslim jurists like Ibn Rushd(30) was made of tight-fitting and transparent cloth. Customarily, Arabs tended to wear many layers of clothing in proclamation of their wealth, who rather than discard these cherished Coptic garment, opted to wear another long-sleeved garment beneath it, thereby conforming to the new Islamic dress-codes. This modification was approved and regarded to symbolise chastity rather than luxury. This also explains the absence of Egyptian dress in Arab costumes before Islam (Fig. 32).

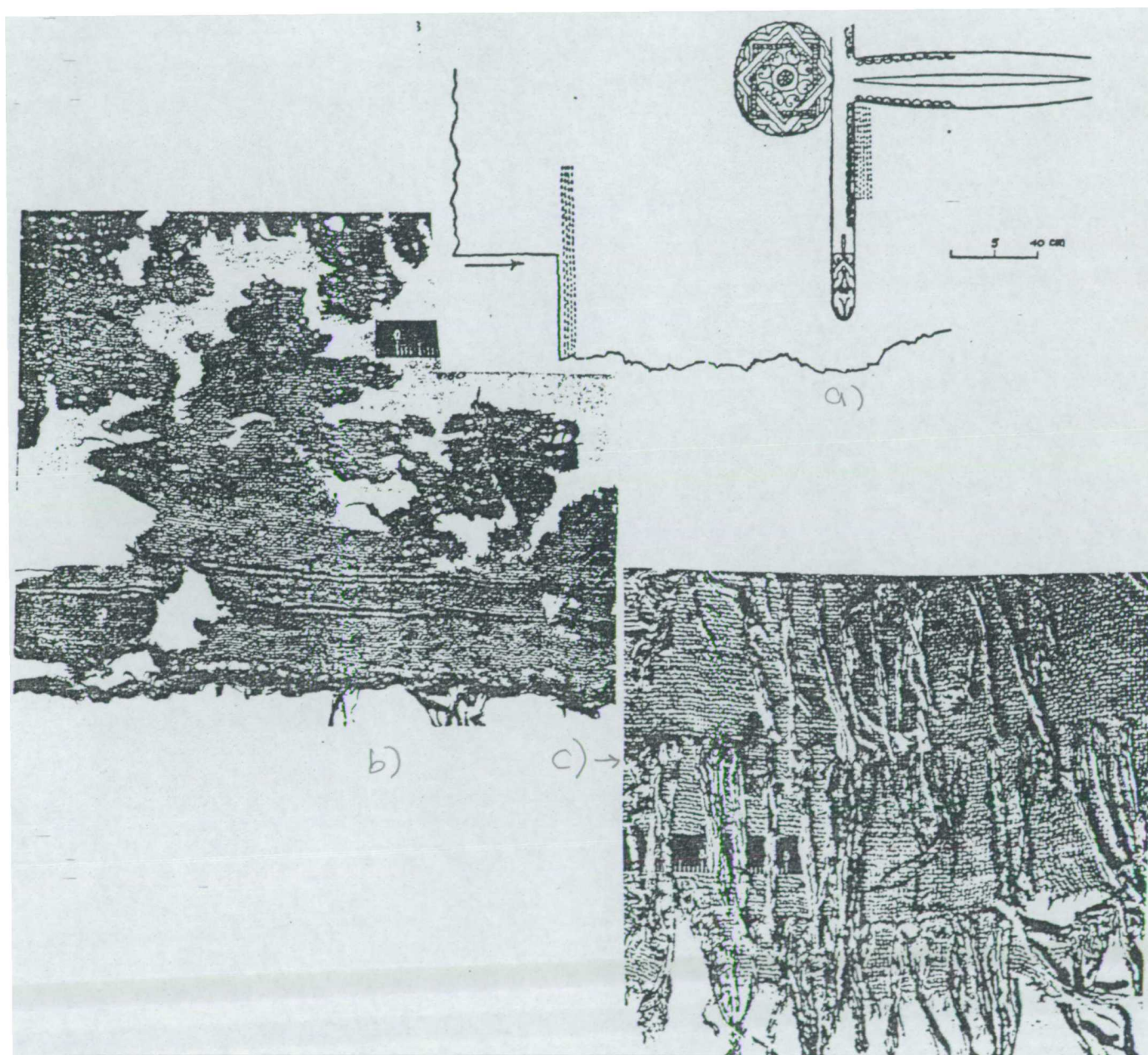


Fig. 31

a) Linen tunic with decorative motifs, from the tomb of Elahbel (c. 100 AD).
Damascus, National Museum
Length 180cm

b,c) Fragments of gubāti material, from the tomb of Lamlika (c. 50 AD).
Damascus, National Museum
[source: Pfister, Les Textiles de Palmyre, Paris (1934-40), vol. I, p. 103]



Fig. 32

- a) Detail of Egyptian dress on the gilded shrine of Tutankhamun (Egyptian 18th Dynasty).
Cairo, Egyptian Museum
- b) Princess Dawshwari, daughter of the Arab King Sanatruq;
statue from Hatra (138 AD).
Baghdad, Iraqi Museum, No. 56752

Although the Egyptian style of dress (32a) was not favoured by Arab women, the Hatran (32b) and Palmyran dress which consisted of many layers and long sleeves was popular in Arabia.

Apart from the Coptic textiles, cotton, linen and silk were also imported from neighbouring Yemen, Qatar, Mesopotamia, Persia and India, collectively known to the Arabs as ḥullāl, yamāniya.

Yemeni goods were either ready-made garments such as the burūd or ḥibrāt(31) or simply textiles for tailoring. Maḥjar was one such material, a soft, dark cloth named after the area in Yemen which produced it usually for turbans. The Prophet himself wore such a turban in black on the day he entered Makka, just as the Anṣārs twisted theirs to resemble black crows(32).

Another Yemeni fabric was the caṣab. The burūd itself was made from a particular Yemeni fabric wherein the yarn it was woven with, was first tied before dyeing to leave white, uncoloured blotches on it. A special widow's garment was also imported from Yemen, which many elderly women came to be adopted as well. According to Bukhārī(33), this was a form of ḥijāb or cuṣub (head-band) twisted over the veils. Supposedly this cuṣub was the Yemeni version of huburāt and burūd made from cotton or linen. Rumour has it this was dyed with urine, giving it its beige or off-white or light yellow colour. Others say cuṣub is actually a plant similar to wirs(34), which grows in Yemen and is commonly used for

dying clothes into a light yellow colour. Musallab (Fig. 33) is yet another Yemeni material supposedly greatly disliked by the Prophet's wife 'Umm Salma. 'Āīsha, it is said, presented a muṣallab(35) (in this case a decorated, cross-patterned coat or dress) to 'Umm Salma who reacted by throwing it away. This does not suggest, however, this cloth was forbidden by Islam - 'Āīsha had previously worn the garment, therefore, 'Umm Salma refused it (Fig. 33).

The murraḥal or Yemeni burūd is actually the murt, which the Anṣār women cut up and tailored into khimārs. This material was vividly decorated with caravan motifs which included camels, tents and palm-trees, a favourite theme on Arab clothes. Bedouin women to this day, still weave such motifs on their clothes and rugs. 'Imrā' al-Qaīs had a famous description of his beloved who wore a murt murraḥal consisting of an outer garment and long train, decorated with the caravan motifs(36) (Fig. 34 - Pl. XXV).

The murraḥal is alternately known as the hīrf, from the hīra rugs of the Arab kings of Hīra. It is believed these rugs were of nomadic Persian origin. Until the beginning of this century, many nomadic tribes in Persia made rugs bearing also caravan illustrations (Figs. 33, 34)(37).

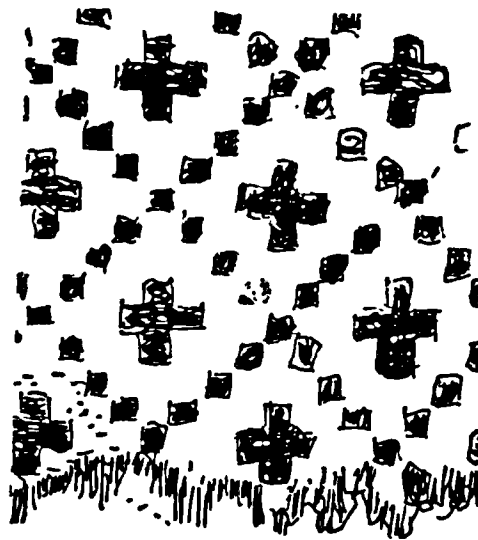


Fig. 33

musallab: geometric design representing crosses; on a woollen Coptic fragment (4th-5th Century AD).

Cairo, Coptic Museum

[source: Volbach W. and Kühnel, E., Late Antique Coptic and Islamic Textiles of Egypt, London (no date), Pl. 65]

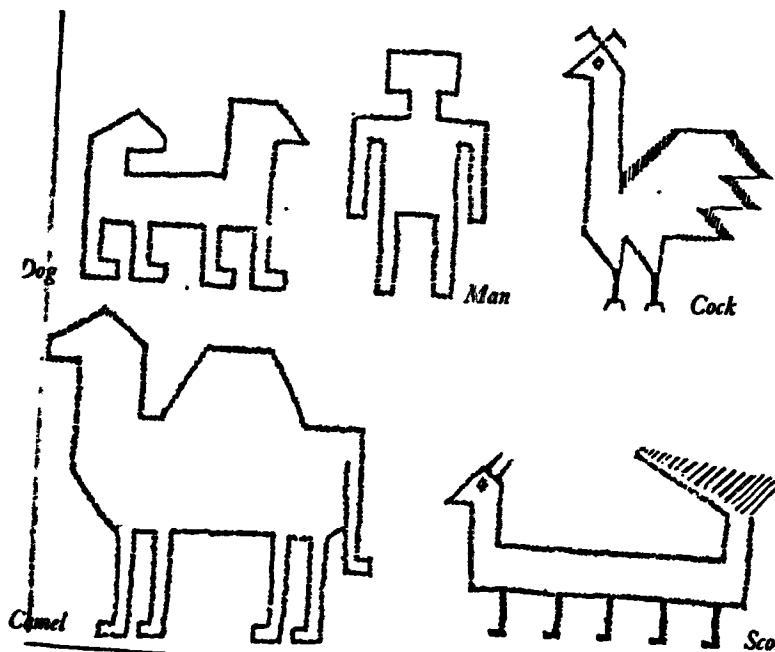


Fig. 34

The murahhal: geometric designs representing "caravan" and "desert" motifs; Persian nomadic rugs and kilims (18th-19th Century AD).

[source: Bamberough, Antique Oriental Rugs, London (1979), p. 141]

Women were under Islamic Law also permitted to use cotton and linen. Silk, although regarded a luxury by some, was also permitted for use in hijāb clothing. Men were restricted, however, only to wear it as a 2cm wide border on their garments, while women were free to wear a complete silk outfit. Various types of silk were available such as hulla sirā(38), once presented to the Prophet in the form of a ceremonial robe. This he promptly handed over to 'Alī and instructed him to "make khimārs for the Fātimas"(39). 'Ibrīsam, was another type of silk, striped and mixed with khazz silk, and used for making khimārs. Such striped material is often called musalyr qadanī(40), in which the stripes can be of yellow silk sewn on a wollen background. A golden or royal silk known as 'ibrīsam mudhabab, again comprises of yellow silk stripes which presumably give the cloth its shiny golden colour.

Wollen cloaks or burūds included the qaṭarī, which according to Sunna sources was made of Qatari red or brown camel hair, found in Bahrain in the Arabian Gulf.

2. Colours

Red and brown were commonly shared between men and women alike. Even the Prophet is said to have favoured and worn red as did 'Āīsha(41). A damaged statue (c. 50 AD), Palmyra

found in Zabadai's tomb, shows a headless woman in patterned draperies painted in red and green(42). Green was also a favourite colour of the Prophet's wardrobe(43).

Green and black were popular among the women too. The Prophet once gave a khamīsa (a black cloak striped with black and green)(44) to 'Umm Khālīd, daughter of Khālīd Ibn Sa'īd 'Ibn al-ʿĀṣ. In the Jāhiliya times, black was not often worn as it symbolised mourning women, vividly described in the poetry of Labīd and Nahshālīf: ^(musūh) these women wore dark, wollen cloth wrapped round their heads(45) and scratched their faces and chests in mourning. A similar detailed description of a mourning Arab woman is illustrated on a funerary relief from Palmyra (Pl. XXVI). Her breast bears small incisions in which still traces of red paint exist, representing lacerations inflicted from a traditional Semitic funeral custom forbidden in the Old Testament(46). It is suggested this custom could also be of Arab origin which explains the Arab dislike of black both before and after the rise of Islam.

Whereas formerly women's cloaks, mantles, shawls, etc. were of brighter colours and luxurious designs, now with the coming of Islam more darker colours and simpler patterns were adopted to suit the khimār, jilbāb, murt, milḥafa etc.

B) The Specifications of the Hijāb

1. Measurements

According to one Ḥadīth(47), the Prophet allowed only one shibīr to be added to the length of his wife's garments, who upon requesting * more, were allowed yet another shibīr. The garments were then sent for measurement to the Prophet's close companions, the wives adding first an additional dhirāʿ(48) to their length. According to another Ḥadīth(49), the Prophet said that women's ʾizār should be one shibīr longer than the men's, which if still insufficient, could have only one extra dhirāʿ added. Henceforth, the length of women's garments were extended by one shibīr or dhirāʿ longer than the men's. What, however, were their lengths before these modifications came about? According to one Ḥadīth, the "men's ʾizār falls to the middle of the leg"(50). Therefore, an addition of one shibīr(51) - about 10cm - to the length of women's garments, would certainly extend them down to the feet.

2. Sleeves

For the sleeve length, Abū Dāwūd(52) describes how the Prophet's sleeves came down to the wrists, and accordingly asked women to similarly wear sleeves reaching their wrists to leave only the hands uncovered. The Prophet also

favoured(53) simple and modest garments with no exaggerated decorations such as trains or heavy embroidery. No specific measurements exist for women's clothing which must basically be wide or loose-fitting and extended to reach the feet.

3. The 'Ihrām Garment

One Ḥadīth(54) states that women should neither cover their faces with the niqāb nor their hands with qufāz (gloves) when on Ḥajj (pilgrimage). Another adds they are forbidden neither to wear these, nor perfumed or coloured clothes with saffron and wirs(55) during Ḥajj.

From these two Ḥadīths, it is clearly revealed that women were forbidden to cover their faces and hands at any time during Ḥajj, a fact which a vast majority of Muslim jurists(56) agree upon. In addition to this, there exist no examples of any Muslim women who covered their faces during pilgrimage, with the exception of the Prophet's wives, in respect of their hijāb requirements. 'Ā'isha reportedly relates how when the wives were on Ḥajj with the Prophet they ".... used to cover their faces when passengers and pilgrims passed near them, and uncovered them when the pilgrims had passed by."(57)

4. Decent Garments

It is told, how 'Asmā', daughter of Abū Bakr, an 'Ā'isha's sister, once came to the Prophet wearing only flimsy clothing through which her body was easily seen. Turning his face away, the Prophet said to her:

"O 'Asmā', when the girl attains her majority it is not proper that any part of her body should be seen

except this and this,"

pointing to his face and his hands(58). This Hadīth has repeatedly been used by many Qur'ānic commentators, to translate the true meaning of zīna and 'illā mā ḡhara minhā ("Except what appear thereof")(59). It also reveals that decent clothing must be worn alongside hijāb, avoiding transparent or tight-fitting clothing.

5. Prayer Garment

According to 'Ā'isha, the Prophet said, "Any prayer of any woman is not acceptable without khimār." When the Prophet was asked whether women could pray with only a dir'c and a khimār or 'izār, he-said, "Yes, but only if it is the case that the dress covers the body and falls to the feet."(60)

The Prophet's companion, Mālik Ibn Anas, reported how even ʿĀīsha prayed in a dirʿ and khimār only. It can, therefore, be concluded that Islam did not require any particular dress for prayer or pilgrimage - the same garment could be worn for daily purposes as well as for prayer time as long as those beautiful bodily parts are decently concealed. There are those, however, who argue that a woman's face could also be regarded as part of her beauty - despite this, no religious restrictions are given to cover this part at any time. With regard to the hijāb, no exceptions are either made to restrict its use to free or slave women(61). The hijāb was created to standardise the clothing of all Muslim women enabling them to move freely whether in public or in seclusion.

In general, it can be summarised that the hijāb of early Islamic times involved:

- any long dress or garment covering the body;
- covering the hair and bosoms;
- avoiding tight clothes;
- avoiding perfumed clothes during prayer or Hajj;
- leaving the hands, face and feet uncovered, with the jilbāb and khimār serving as the most suitable form of clothing.

This modest way of life of the early Muslims, however, seemed to have lasted for a short while only. The extent of its simplicity is exemplified by the incident where a visiting delegation of Yemeni kings and chiefs met with the Caliph Abū Bakr, who in support of the Caliph's modestly worn shamla and īzār, removed their richly embroidered hulal and burūd (cloaks). This gesture, however, did not encourage the people as a whole to cease their luxurious way of life. Indications of a major change only arose after the Prophet was given a hilla sirā' (a silk embroidered cloak), which he divided among his companions, to make into khimārs for their wives. Other extremes of luxury included 'Isfahānī's(62) description of Marwān, grandson of Caliph 'Uthmān, and his traditional many layers of richly embroidered silk tunics displaying his ranking, a common practise which was to last up to the end of the Rāshidūn period. Despite such discouraging signs, the re-introduction of hijāb faced little difficulty. In readily converting to Islam, however, many Arabs like Caliph 'Umar, did not abandon their former aristocratic traditions such as forbidding slave women to use the khimār lest they be mistaken for nobility(63).

In those early years of Islam, the Muslim preachers were extensively involved in conquests of war and reorganisation of new societies. Some Jāhiliya traditions (including the use of hijāb) plus sufficient financial backing were, therefore, needed to create unity among these new societies. To further ensure achieving this goal, generally little or no restrictions were being made in the style of clothing, which by the end of the Rāshidūn period included a variety of new fashions, complying of course with Islamic Law. The influx in new fabrics gave rise to an increase in new styles - Sukaḡyna, daughter of Ḥusayn of Ḥijāz, was a well-known trend-setter in this respect. 'Isfahānī(64) relates how the new hijāb included a diversity of veils, scarfs and mantles. Although such changes in trends were first introduced among the nobility, these were soon to spread among all Muslim as a whole, unlike Jāhiliya times where only a privileged few could enjoy such an opportunity. The former Jāhiliya aristocracy became the trend-setters of the 'Umayyad society.

C) Some Archaeological Evidence from the 'Umayyad Period -

In 41/661, Muḡāwiyā, founder of the powerful 'Umayyad Dynasty of Mekkā, set off from primitive Madīna in Ḥijāz to settle and establish the 'Umayyad seat of power in Damascus,

an ancient and strategically important city, centre of both Roman and Byzantine civilisations. In the years following his death, however, his successors visited Damascus only to attend state ceremonies requiring their official presence in court. Their tribal customs were much more suited to the desert regions they lived in, where elaborately decorated palaces and baths were erected in places such as Mushatta, al-Munīya and al-Ḥayr al-Gharbī of the Jordanian and Syrian deserts, to mention but a few locations(65). In 30/670, the 'Umayyads conquered the north-west of Syria, culminating in the siege of Constantinople. In 92/711, Spain, Sindh and north-west India were subdued. By 111/730, The 'Umayyad Caliphs represented a truly universal power which however lasted only to 132/750 when their dynasty was overthrown by the 'Abbāsids.

Although little is known of the arts of the early 'Umayyad period, some of the earliest pictorial representations of Islamic civilisation have been preserved in their elaborate "desert palaces". The wall paintings of Qusayr 'Amra and fragments of ṭirāz textiles are the only archaeological evidence that ḥijāb existed at that time. It is well documented that ṭirāz, an Arabic inscription woven into, embroidered, or applied to a piece of cloth(66) were first produced during this period of the Muslim Caliphate.

Records show that 'Abd al-Malik b. Marwan, was the Caliph responsible for the Arabisation process from as early as 74/693. To set this off, he introduced the use of Arabic inscriptions on textiles(67), a move typical of the 'Umayyad policies on reform - former inscriptions were substituted with Qur'ānic ones to symbolise Islam and power.

To this day, only three fragmented pieces of textile still exist, generally believed to originate from the 'Umayyad era. The oldest piece(68) is an Egyptian linen weaving (Fig. 35) with an inscription dating back to Rajab 88/June 707, preserved in the Islamic Museum of Cairo as display no. 10846. On this fragment are sewn two wollen tapestry bands: one is decorated with a multi-coloured silk design, while the other contains an inscription reading:

"This turban is of Sāmū'ī Ibn Mūsa was made in Fayyūm in the year eight and eighty".

The town-name is not clear any more, but the weaving style is typical of Fayyūm.

The second piece (Pl. XXVII) is wollen with a tapestry weft (l. 18 x 5cm) exhibited in Museum of Washington D.C.(69). The basic pattern of this depicts horizontal rows of circles enclosing stylised cocks on pedestals. One minute Kūfī inscriptions on this reads:

"[Commander of the] faithful Ma [rwān]

This has been ordered [أمير المؤمنين — رواة]."

The traditional Sassanian background design of this tapestry suggests that it should be attributed to the period of Marwān I (64-65/648-649). Some scholars argue, however, that it should be attributed to the period of Marwān II (127-32/744-49) - the reign of the former was very much shorter than that of the latter, hence the likelihood to it having been produced during the period of Marwān II's rule. Despite this uncertainty of date, the weaving style indicates it is most probably of Persian or Mesopotamian origin.

The third piece (Pl. XXVIII) consists of three separate fragments of red silk, which again are generally believed to date back to Marwān II without considering their calligraphic pattern(70):

a) The first fragment (Pl. XXVIIIa) (21 x 50.5cm), decorated with a heart and pearl band design, has an Arabic inscription embroidered in yellow silk reading:

"['Abd]allah 'Amīr al-Mu'[minīn]."

London, Victoria and Albert Museum

b) The second fragment (Pl. XXVIIIb) (16 x 35cm) also has a yellow silk inscription reading:

"Amara bī 'amalihi fī Rajab".

New York, The Brooklyn Museum of Art

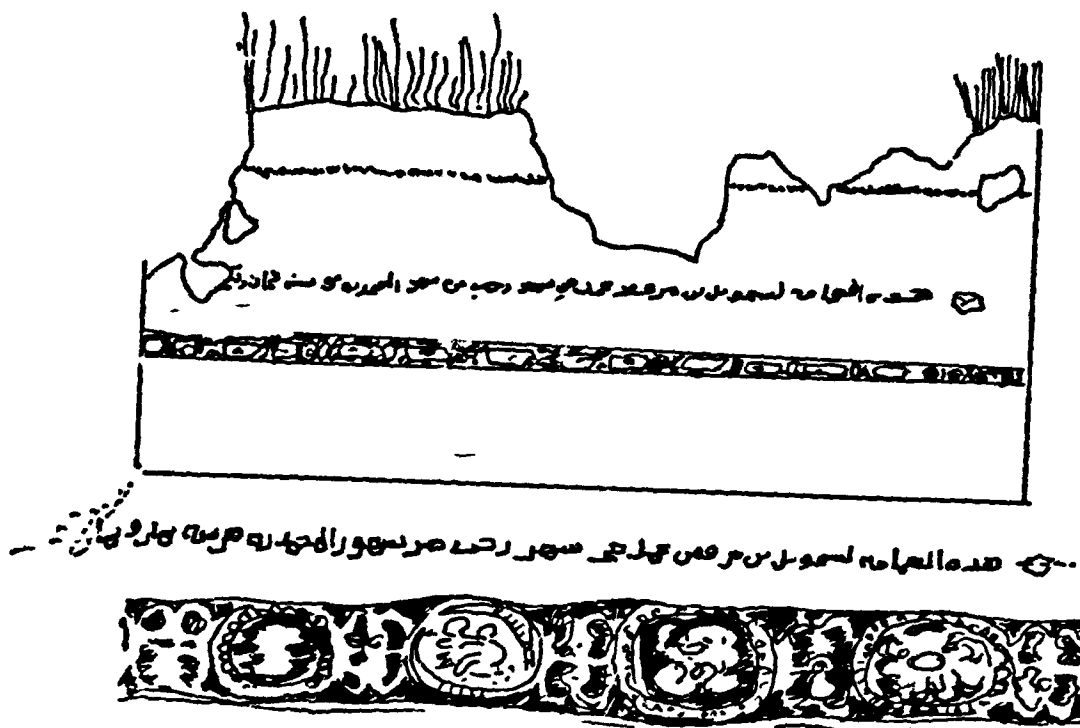


Fig. 35

Detail of the earliest surviving tirāz weaving. Fragment from the turban of Samu'īl Ibn Mūsa, made in the Fayyūm in Rajab 88/707.

Cairo, Museum of Islamic Art, No. 10846

c) The third fragment (Pl. XXVIIIc) (8 x 53cm) is decorated with two bands of circles; the inscription reads:

"Fī ṭirāz 'ifrīqīya."

Manchester, Whitworth Art Gallery

The fragmentary state of these pieces has made it difficult to determine their original use. Hence their limited usefulness in dating the hiḡāb. We can only be certain that the inscriptions on these pieces were added in the 'Umayyad period, as the favoured 'Umayyad red and yellow colours would prove.

Archaeological evidence found in frescoes of 'Umayyad palaces (particularly in Qusayr 'Amra(71)), provide additional support in this theory. Qusayr 'Amra, was a desert region situated some 50 miles outside 'Ammān, on the edge of the Jordanian Plateau(72), which provided an ideal desert environment the 'Umayyads preferred and from which they originated. It is believed Caliph al-Walid I(73) (86-96/705-15) built the magnificent palace of Qusayr 'Amra, the dating(74) of which is based on a painting of six kings symbolising the victories of al-Walid I between 92-93-96/711-12-15(75).

The frescoes have unfortunately been damaged over the last fifty years, but were luckily copied by Mielich in 1901

an Austrian painter accompanying Musil, who discovered the building in 1898(77).

The frescoes not only assist in dating the building but also illustrate the typical 'Umayyad court life. Some Caliphs, for example, were renowned for their passion of the ḥarīm. One such Caliph was Yazīd II(78) (125-6/743-4) who lived in the desert some twenty years before becoming Caliph. Apart from his love of women, he led a carefree life and surrounded himself with poets, singers and dancers, ^{such} his private life having been depicted in many figurines and paintings. It is now firmly recognised(79) that the frescoes of Qusayr 'Amara are derived from the Hellenistic art of Syria. Let us, as a next step, focus our attention on some of the female figures and numerous illustrations of curtains depicted in these frescoes, as well as their resemblance to some of Palmyran reliefs(80).

Hijāb in the sense of seclusion, and originating from the Prophet's wives, came to be introduced to the 'Umayyad ^{Court} ḥarīm, as illustrated in the frescoes, thereby showing the archaeological importance of this and other 'Umayyad buildings. The relevance of this also proves that hijāb, in the form of a garment became a fashion trend than a need. The early Islamic guidelines in simplicity ceased with such powerful local influences as these. The new styles and

forms of hijāb served the demands of the 'Umayyad court ladies, as exemplified in the use of turbans. The only existing evidence on the textile used for these turbans comes from fragments of 9 men's turbans, similarly worn by the women of that period. One illustration from Qusayr 'Amra shows a huge turban decorated with crossed lines and spots, made most probably of khazz material, popularly used for 'Umayyad turbans (Fig. 35 - Pl. 29).

It was customary during this era, for cities and districts to partly pay annual taxes in the form of textiles(81). Apart from the occasional reference to the use of these textiles, their descriptions are relatively non-specific. From such a limited source of historical information, it can be assumed that these areas continued their weaving industry well after the Islamic conquest, with textiles playing a modest role of importance in the 'Umayyad economic and social life. This leads one to conclude that the turban which in the Prophet's time was forbidden for women, or even twisting or folding a piece of cloth resembling a turban, had now returned as a distinctive fashion trend (Fig. 36 - Pl. XXX).

Another previously unfavoured item during the Prophet's time was the use of black colour in the khimār. These were not prevalent in Hijāz and Arabia during his lifetime, their



Fig. 36

Various shapes of turbans from Syria and Jordan:

- a) detail of a wall painting from Qusayr 'Amra, Jordan (early 8th Century AD).
- b) Stucco sculpture from Khirbat al-Mafjar, Jordan (8th Century AD).
Jerusalem, Archaeological Museum
- c) Bust of a richly jewelled woman, Palmyra (3rd Century AD).
Copenhagen, Ny Carlsberg Glyptotek, No. 2793

re-introduction having descended from the Jāhiliya times, "lacerations"(82) as well as from Iraq where they were commonly worn. Even in Madīna, 'Isfahānī(83) relates how a merchant from Kūfa once ventured into the city and sold all his khimārs except the black ones, whereupon Dārmīy, a friend and poet of the merchant, composed the following lines to encourage their sale:

"Say to the beautiful woman in her black khimār

What have you done to the worshipper monk?"

These lines became so popular that in no time at all the merchant had sold each and every black khimār he had. Henceforth, they came to be widely used in Madīna as well.

Slowly but surely, the inhabitants of Damascus, Makka and Madīna, began enjoying a considerable more luxurious and carefree life, as depicted in the frescoes of Quṣayr 'Amra. Herein, the Caliph (or a prince) and his court were portrayed as leading lives similar to those of the classic Greeks in Syria. Other evidence suggests that also the Palmyran trends were introduced at this time, exemplified by the appearance of Palmyran turbans and cloaks. Rich embroidery and tirāz flourished, all of which are tracable in a number of literary and historical sources. Even perfumed and brightly coloured garments proved very popular, following the trend of al-Walīd 'Ibn 'Abd al-Malik

(86/705-96/714) who wore layers of perfumed clothes. The Arab aristocracy proved extremely influential in all fields during the 'Umayyad times. Regional influences are also evident in the 'Umayyad hijāb, derived from a few historical and literary sources. Even the Sunna authorities who wrote at that time reflected the impressions of those days when they described the various aspects of hijāb and life as a whole.

In short, the wealth of the 'Umayyads brought with it a new style of hijāb, combining the regional and classical traditions practised under Muslim patronage, which included not only the jilbāb and khimār, but also their definitions in the early Islamic period.

* * *

To
NOTES CHAPTER III

- (1) The Holy Qur'ān, Ahzāb, 32:33
[قَامُوا فِي بُيُوتِكُمْ] "Qamū(stay) quietly in your houses".
- (2) *ibid*, 53
[أَسْأَلُوهُمْ مِنْ خَلْفِ الْحِجَابِ] "Ask them from behind a hijāb screen".
- (3) *ibid*, 31-
[أُمَمَاتُ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ] "Mothers of Believers".
- (4) *opp. cit.*, Nūr, 24:31.
- (5) *opp. cit.*, Ahzāb, 33:59.
- (6) al-Jāhizī, "Al-Tabbasur bi al-Tijāra," Revue de L'Académie des Sciences et des Lettres de l'Arabie du Damas Vol. XII, (1351/1932) p. 334.
- (7) Sunan al-Tarmadhī, Vol. I, p. 142; Sunan Abū Dāwūd, Vol. I, p. 199; and other mentioned in the Sunnan books.
- (8) Mūwatta' Ibn Mālik, Vol. I, p. 142; Al-Sunan al-Kubra, Vol. II, p. 233.
- (9) "būlighāt" - this refers to the girls who have reached womanhood in Sunnan books mentioned above.
- (10) The majority of commentators agree that "Three pieces of garment are enough to provide sitr (modesty) covering and movement. They are dirā, khimār and jilbāb," Ibn Qudāma, al-Mughnī, Vol. I, p. 524.
- (11) All the Sunans describe women as "mutajalbibāt" - covered with dark cloaks making them unrecognisable from dusk.
- (12) Ibn Mandhār, Lisān al-ʿArab, "ʿAjar".
- (13) Serjeant, R.B., Material for a History of Islamic Textiles up to the Mongol Conquest, Beirut (1972), p. 124.
- (14) al-Sabakiy, Muhammed Khatāb, al-Dīn al-Khālīs (The True Religion) (Arabic), 2nd ed., Damascus (1970), Vol. 6, p. 214; Sahih Muslim, p. 451.
- (15) Ibn Manẓūr, *op. cit.*, Lifāḥ, Milālā; Dozy, Sup. aux. Dic., p. 104.
- (16) Ibn Qudāma, Al-Mughnī, Vol. I, p. 525.

- (17) The Holy Qur'ān, Nūr, 24:31.
- (18) Ibn Hanbal, Matālib 'Ālīf al-Nuḥa, Vol. I, p. 344; Book of Sunnan, Vol. I, p. 344.
- (19) Ibn al-'Arabī, Abū Bakir, Muhammad Ibn 'Abdallah al-Andalusī, (d. 512 H.), Aḥkām al-Qur'ān, 1st ed., Cairo (1331/1950).
- (20) Alf, Jawad, al-Mufasssal, Vol. 7, p. 594.
- (21) Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī, Vol. 3, p. 14.
- (22) Serjeant, opp. cit., p. 129.
- (23) Ibn Rushd, ^{al}Maqāḍimat Ibn Rushd (Collection of Sunnan), Beirut (no date), Vol. I, p. 133.
- (24) al-Sayūṭī, al-Sunnan al-Kubra, Vol. II, p. 235.
- (25) al-Maqrīzī, Kuṣṣat al-Maqrīzī, Bulāq (1270), Vol. II, p. 41.
- (26) Mahir, Suad, al-Mansūjāt al-ʿIslāmīya (Islamic Textiles), Cairo (1977), p. 94.
- (27) Diwān Zuḥayr Ibn Abī Salma, Cairo (1964), p. 183.
- (28) Marzuq, Abdal aziz, al-Zakhrafa al-Mansūja al-Fāṭimīa (Fatimid Woven Decorations), Cairo (1942), p. 703.
- (29) al-Baladhurī, Futūḥ al-Buldān, Cairo (1956-57), Vol. 2, p. 26.
- (30) Ibn Rushd, ^{opp. cit.} al-Muḥṣan, p. 118.
- (31) Serjeant, opp. cit., p. 122.
- (32) Qurtubī, Aḥkām al-Qur'ān, Vol. 5, p. 173; Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī, Vol. 3, p. 169.
- (33) opp. cit., "Libas".
- (34) Serjeant, opp. cit., p. 122; ^{muḥṣar}"muḥṣar" and "mūwaras", Sunnan Abū Dāwūd, Vol. 2, p. 374; Sunnan Ibn Māja, Vol. 2, p. 1191.
- (35) Volbach, W. F. and Kühnel, Ernest, Late Antique Coptic and Islamic Textiles of Egypt, ed. Foyles, London, Plate No. 65; Diwān Imrū' al-Qaī's.
- (36) al-Zawzanī, Sharīf, al-Muḥallaqāt, Cairo (1925), p. 24; Diwān Imrū' al-Qaī's, revised by Abū al-Faḍl al-ʿIbrāhīm, Cairo (1958).

- (37) Lisān al-ʿArab, "riḥāl". Numerous caravan motives illustrated on Caucasian Isfahān rugs and carpets in geometric representations such as camels, bedouins, scorpions and loaded camels;
Bamberough, Philip, Antique Oriental Rugs and Carpets, 2nd ed., (1983), pp. 44, 68.
- (38) Serjeant cites, sīrāʾ is equivalent to hulla ḥarīr (silk cloak) according to Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī, p. 124. Also see Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim, Vol. III, p. 1645, "Libās".
- (39) Fawāʾim pl. of Fāʾima are the four early Muslims:
 1) Fāʾima al-Zahrāʾ, daughter of Muḥammad
 2) Fāʾima, daughter of Asad, mother of ʿAlī.
 3) Fatīma, daughter of Ḥamza, Muḥammad's uncle.
 4) Fāʾima, daughter of Shāʾiba Ibn Rabīʿa, wife of ʿAqīl Ibn Abī Tālib.
Musnad Ibn Ḥanbal, Vol. 2, p. 95.
- (40) Serjeant, op. cit., p. 124.
- (41) "ʾizār qatarī, made of red khazz," Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī, Vol. IV, p. 29.
- (42) Colledge, op. cit., p. 80.
- (43) All the Sunnan Books mention colours:
Sunnan Abū Dāwūd, Vol. 2, p. 374.;
Sunnan al-Nasāʾī, Vol. 8, p. 180;
Sunnan al-Tarmadhī, Vol. 5, p. 119.
- (44) Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī, Vol. 4, p. 29.
- (45) musūḥ: Dozy, Supp. aux Dict., p. 405, failed to distinguish the misāḥ, while Jāḥilīya poetry describes it as plain wool worn in the morning. See also, Lyall, Mufaḍḍaliyyāt, pp. 232 and 425.
- (46) Drivers, H. J., Religion of Palmyra, ed. Brill (1970), p. 72;
Colledge, op. cit., p. 63.
- (47) shibīr = span = measure of length equal to nine inches (23cm) based on the distance between the tips of an extended thumb and little finger.
Collin's Standard Reference Dictionary, p. 720.
- (48) dhīrāʿ = cubit = an ancient measure of length, about 50cm. Originally this is the length from the elbow to the middle finger.
Collin's, op. cit., p. 184.

shibīr and dhīrāʿ:

Serjeant, *op. cit.*, p. 128

Sunnan Abū Dawūd, Vol. II, p. 388

(49) Sunnan Ibn Māja, Vol. II, p. 1185.

(50) Sunnan Abū Dawūd, Vol. II, p. 385.

(51) Sunnan al-Nāṣaʿī, Vol. 8, p. 185;

Malik, al-Muwattaʿ, Beirut (1951), Vol. 2, p. 91.

(52) Sunnan Abū Dawūd, p.

(53) *ibid.*

(54) Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī, Vol. 10, p. 259.

(55) The wars plant grew on the slopes of Suhūl, Yemen. It is a red plant, similar to saffron and used for dyeing. Two mounds of it are sold for one dīnār. See Idrīsī, Nuzhat al-Mushtāq, ed. Dozy and de Goeje, Leiden (1893), Vol. I, p. 51. Yaqūt said: "...four things which have filled the world and which are only to be found in the Yemen. These are wars dye, frankincense, kundur, wood khitr and asbb cloth". See Yaqūt al-Hamawī, Muʿjam al-Buldān, Beirut (1955), Vol. IV, p. 1036.

(56) All the Sunna books agree on this. Ibn Qudāma, Mughnī al-Muḥtāj, 9 vols., Cairo (no date), vol. 3, p. 294.

(57) *ibid.*

(58) al-Sayūṭī, *op. cit.*, p. 223.

(59) The Holy Qurʾān, Nūr, 24:31.

(60) Sunnan al-Tarmadhī, Vol. II, p. 215.

(61) Ibn Qudāma, *op. cit.*, Vol. I, p. 524.

(62) al-ʿIsfahānī, Abū al-Faraj, Kitāb al-Aghānī, ed. Bulūq, Cairo, Vol. 17, p. 89.

(63) Ibn Qudāma, *op. cit.*, Vol. I, p. 526.

(64) Kitāb al-Aghānī, Vol. 14, p. 16.

- (65) "Most of them had been discovered and excavated during the last sixty years," Fehervari, Geza, "Art and Architecture", The Cambridge History of Islam, (1982), Vol. 2B, Ch. 9, pp. 702-40. For a full description, history and architecture of these buildings see Creswell, K. A., E.M.A. Vol. 11, pp.
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Kuhnell and Bellinger, opp. cit., p. 7.
- (71) Musil, Alois, Kusejr Amra, Wien (1902), 2 vols.
- (72) Creswell, ^{op. cit.}, pp. 390-414.
- (73) Almagro and others, Qusayr 'Amra, Residencia y Banos Omeyas en el Desierto de Jordania, Instituto Hispano-Arabi de Cultura, Madrid (1975).
- (74) Creswell, op. cit., p.
- (75) The painting entitled "The Family of Kings", with four inscriptions underneath in Arabic and Greek, depicts the Byzantine Emperor, the Visigothic King of Spain, the Persian Emperor and the Negus of Abyssinia. Van Berchem's brilliant suggestion has the adherence of Herzfeld in Encyclopaedia of Islam, Vol. I, pp. 338-9. See also Grabar, O., "The painting of the Six Kings at Qusayr 'Amra", Ars Orientalis, Vol. I (1954), pp. 187 ff.

- (76) According to the painting of an enthroned monarch at the back of the wall of the little alcove.
Fehervari, *opp. cit.*, p. 706
Etthinghausen, Arab Painting, p. 41
- (77) Musli, Alois, Kusjr Amra, Kaiserliche Akademie der Wissenschaften, 2 vols., Wien (1907).
- (78) Kitāb al-Aghānī, Vol. 6, p. 104 and Vol. 2 pp. 27-8.
- (79) Creswell, ^{*opp. cit.*} ~~Kit~~, p. 47, quoting Brunnow, van Berchman, Diehl, Herzfeld.
Etthinghunsen, *opp. cit.*, p. 40.
- (80) Creswell was first to bring to light this resemblance. See Creswell, *opp. cit.*, p. 400.
- (81) According to Bierman and Serjent, cities used to pay their annual taxes in textiles. See Bierman, *opp. cit.*, p. 6
Serjeant, *opp. cit.*, p. 7
- (82) Colledge, ~~opp. cit.~~ *opp. cit.*, p. 145.
- (83) Kitāb al-Aghānī, Vol. 3, pp. 45-6.

CHAPTER IV

THE CATEGORIES OF THE HIJĀB ACCORDING TO THE QUR'ĀN

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CHAPTER IV

THE CATEGORIES OF THE HIJĀB ACCORDING TO THE QUR'ĀN

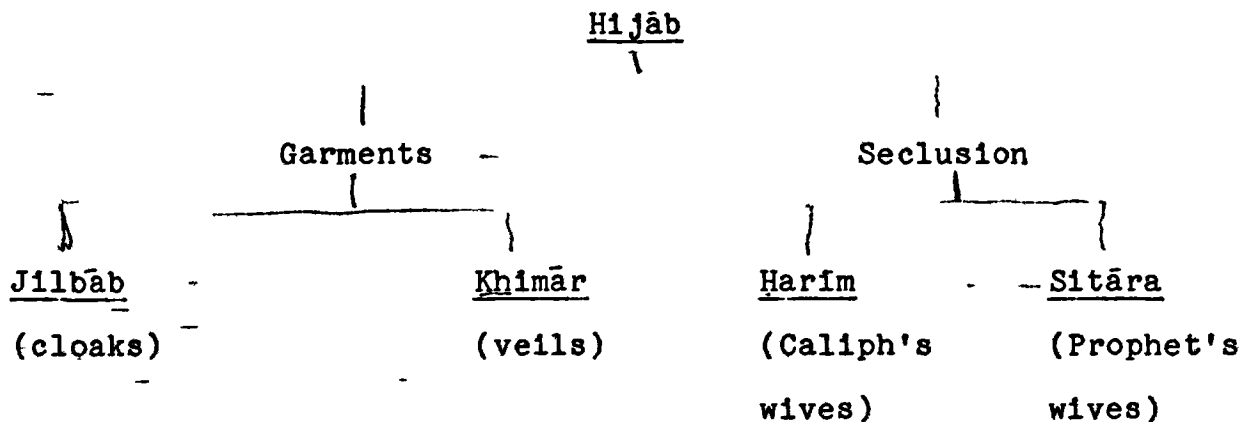
The Qur'ān uses the words jilbāb, khimār, and sitir in reference to the various categories of hijāb, which itself has already been extensively defined in Chapter I. Here, therefore, only jilbāb and khimār (as dress codes) and sitir (as seclusion) or sitāra (a curtain) will be finally examined. Their interpretation will enable us to conclude the definition of hijāb from the early Islamic period up till the present day. It should be noted, however, that many Arabic words tend to carry more than one meaning, the Qur'ān itself having been written in such classical Arabic to serve as an important reference book for centuries to come. The above mentioned words have, therefore, been carefully chosen to interpret the Qur'ānic concept of hijāb. There follows an extensive linguistic and historical examination of the Qur'ān to show how and why these terms came to most suitably describe hijāb, not forgetting of course some important literary and artistic references as well.

According to the Qur'ān, it seems that the jilbāb, khimār and sitir formed the basis of hijāb. There were, however, other

forms of hijāb, considering it had been unanimously agreed that zīna and tabaruj (adornment) were not favoured by Islam. Guidelines (as we have seen in Chapter I) were given to all Muslim women to guard their appearance, hence, jilbāb and khimār came to be the only acceptable garment for hijāb, especially during prayer and pilgrimage times, while sitir was imposed on the Prophet's wives only. Here it will be determined why these terms came to be regarded as the true meaning of hijāb.

— It is agreed that hijāb as a garment was sub-divided into: the jilbāb, which consisted of outer garments such as cloaks, mantles, wrappers, shawls, etc.; and the khimār, which consisted of head covers, such as veils, masks, scarves, mufflers, etc. These two articles constituted the simplest form of dress any Muslim woman was able to purchase or wear. This standard dress code was ideal, whereby no special garment was required for hijāb, which enabled the women to continue their daily social and religious life in the spirit of Islam without showing class distinction.

The only distinction observed was among the Prophet's wives, who by practising sitir showed respect to "Mothers of Believers" and to the Prophet himself. Sitir involved the seclusion of the Prophet's wives using hijāb and the sitāra (curtain), which founded the concept of the ḥarīm in the 'Umayyad period as we shall see in this chapter.



To summarise hijāb, it can be said it culminated into Islamic garments with seclusion, which in turn are sub-divided into: the jilbāb (cloak) category, comprising of murt, milḥafa, īzār, etc., the khimār (veil) category, comprising of niqāb, burqa, etc., the harīm category and finally the sitāra category.

1. The Hijāb as a Garment

A) The Jilbāb

1. The Introduction of the Jilbāb in the Qur'ān

"O Prophet! Say to Thy wives and daughters and the women of believers that they let down their jalābīb (over-garments), this will be more proper that they may be known and thus they will not be given trouble(1)."

This Sūra is addressed to the Prophet's wives and all other Muslim women alike. The Qur'ān uses the term jalābīb (pl. of jilbāb) in the phrase "mir jalā-bība-hinna" to refer to their over garments. Jilbāb is from the verb "jal-ba-ba" (to put him a garment called jilbāb(2)). It also means "she covered herself with her garment(3)". Jalaba has another meaning, "thing driven or brought from one country to another(4)". The jalābīb (pl. of majlūb) refers to "people or persons brought from another place(5)". The Lisān al-‘Arab, the hypocrits of Madīna used to call the Muhājirūn "jalābīb(6)". Dozy(7) called the outer garment of the women in Morocco qillāba, and relates this to the esclava from the Spanish esclavina, translated into "jilāba" to mean "the pilgrimage cloth made of thick wool or linen".

Therefore, the use of jilbāb as a garment literally means "women's outer wrapping garment that envelopes the whole body", "that with which a woman covers over her other garments(8)". It is called milḥafa and milā'a(9), also khimār(10), riḍā', īzār(11) and murt(12).

The frequent appearance of the jilbāb in Jāhiliyyah poetry indicates it was popularly worn during that time. This also indicates it was regularly used as a woman's over-garment, made, most likely, of dark woollen material. With the coming of Islam, women were then advised to let down this over-garment. - The Ḥadīth go further to suggest that one particular covering should be selected and used as a jilbāb, since most women usually had several such over-garments in their wardrobe (which if not the case) they were to borrow from a relative or even a neighbour. This came about in answer to the queries Muslims made either to the Prophet or to his wives, on when or how the jilbāb was to be worn.

Commentators(13) and translators(14) of the Qur'ān have agreed that the jilbāb is a woman's garment with which she covers her other garments. It could be in the form of a head cover such as the khimār with which the head and bosom are covered only; or the ridā'(15) which covers part of the outer garment as well; or the simple izār or milā'a covering. Most likely of all, however, it is a wide cloak used as an over-wrap with which women envelope themselves in the milbafa manner.

By 5/627, however, wearing the jilbāb was widely used as a precautionary measure against possible trouble in Madīna.

"Min ja-lā-bīb-ba-hunna" (their over garment): tradition explains this as to select one article of clothing and cover oneself, or to borrow something equally appropriate from a relative or neighbour. More description of the jilbāb came in the tradition too. ʿĀʾisha(16) upon returning from the battle of Banū al-Mustaliq (5/627) covered her face and her body with her jilbāb. ʿUmm Salma, another wife of the Prophet, described the appearance of the Anṣār women, wrapped in their murūt (pl. of murt)(17) or jalābīb(18) as black crows. She also said that women in their dark jalābīb were unrecognisable at dawn or dusk on their return home from prayer at the mosques.

Jāhiliya poetry itself gives many descriptions of the jilbāb. The works of al-Mirār Ibn Munqidh(19) provide an ideal source of such descriptions, wherein he likens the beauty of his beloved one's fair skin under her jilbāb to "the sun hidden in the clouds". Similarly, the bedouin women speak of young girls walking so peacefully and safely under their coverings, "The falcons walk around him like the walk of girls in

their jalābīb (coverings)(20)". The colour of the jilbāb and the ways in which it covers the body are described as:

- a) "grey hair covered the head"
- b) "dark covering like the darkness of the night"
- c) 'Ibn al-Sakit(21) describes his life as dark as a jilbāb.

From these we learn that the jilbāb was in fact a dark women's covering.

One definition given of the jilbāb is shamla and īzār, which in a previous chapter were noted to have the Hebrew equivalent of simlah and izor(22). The simlah of the Biblical and Talmudic period, was a long, rectangular shaped roll of cloth, worn as an outer garment. Its Greek version was the himation, while the Roman equivalent was the pullium. This cloth also served as a blanket(23). Most probably the Arab shamla, which is "a striped wollen burda"(24), was like the milbafa, both of which are variations of the jilbāb, as previously seen.

2. Evidence of the Jilbab in the Arts of the Pre-Islamic Period

The earliest illustrated simlah comes from reliefs showing the capture of the Judaeen city of Lachish by Sennacherib in 700 BC (Fig. 17). The Judaeen women wear a simlah with a plain border over a plain kethoneth. The simlah usually had a fringed border similar to those depicted on an Assyrian mural (8th Century BC) from Barsip, Tel Ahmar, Mesopotamia (Fig. 9 - Pl. V), worn here by the women as a fringed covering similar to that of Zabibi, Queen of Aribi, from the time of Tiglat-Pilser (824-742 BC) (Fig. 20).

Probably the earliest jilbab is the kaunakes cloak from Sumerian art (Fig. 3) which was draped over one shoulder only. Later on, this developed into a combination of a turban and a cloak or polos. The "Worshipper Queen" from Mari (Fig. 5 - Pl. II), wore a richly fringed mantle made of what seems to be fur, a luxury reserved for goddesses and queens only. On ceremonial occasions the head was covered as well as illustrated once in a rare illustration from the Hittite period (1400 BC) (Fig. 37). This illustration which could be a marriage or wedding ceremony, shows a seated man in front of an open door or window, offering



Fig. 37

The complete covering cloak worn by a woman at a wedding ceremony; fragment of a Hittite clay vessel (Hittite period, c. 1400 BC).
Ankara, Museum of Archaeology, Catalogue No. 567

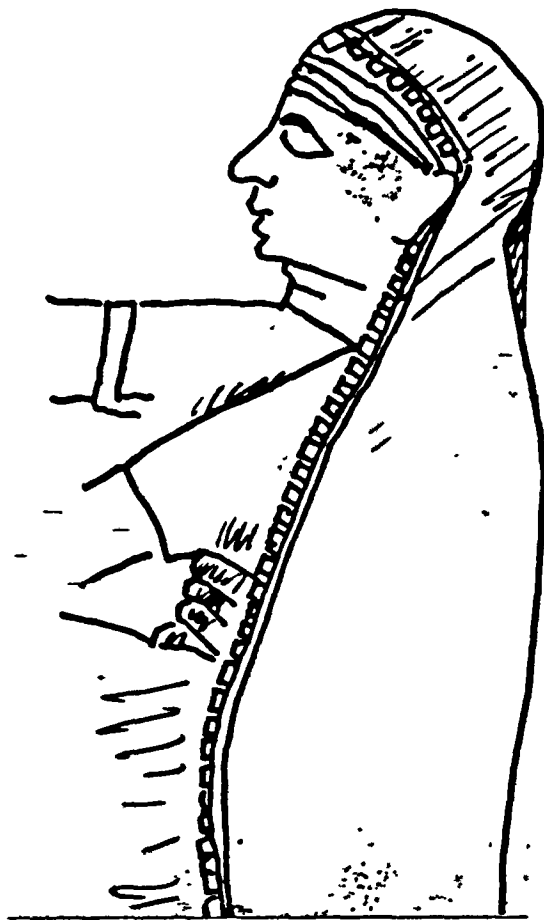
a drinking bowl to a veiled woman. She wears a wrap commonly seen at that time, which covers a large part of her head and body. This cloak which has been known in Sumerian art as the polos, is similar to the simplah of Rebekkah in the Old Testament, and has been translated into Arabic as the shamla. Both the illustrations and their definition correspond with the description of the jilbāb. From then onwards up till Hatra and Palmyra, Arab ladies continued to wear this style, but in a more elaborate fashion, adorning themselves with jewelled and richly dressed styles of head gear and embroidered cloaks.

While earlier styles of cloaks were simpler with only a plain border, Assyrian art now presented a diversity of fringed cloaks such as the one worn by the "Captive Woman" from Barship, Tel Ahmar (8th Century BC) (Fig. 9b - Pl. V) or the one of the "Bedouin Queen" (824-742 BC) Samsi (Fig. 20). Both cloaks cover the head or fall down over the shoulders, and seem to be made of thick dark hairy material, such as goat's or camel's hair, which explains the fringes around the edges. It is most likely that these plain fringed cloaks were worn by foreign women who came under the Assyrian rule, especially the Semites who included

Hebrews, Arabs and Aramaeans. A typical Semitic cloak, is worn by the Aramaean "Spinning Woman" (Fig. 38 - Pl. XXIIa + b) which is fringed again but richly decorated to show the difference between Aramaean weaving and bedouin.

Fringed garments and cloaks were a main feature of the Assyrian ladies' wardrobe which in turn was controlled by Assyrian Law. Their "standard" outfit was a fringed garment of a skirt worn prettily round the hips and a white ḥabāya(25) (veiling) donned whenever the ladies appeared in public. The fringes themselves had an earlier prototype in Mesopotamian arts, back in the third millennium BC(26) (Fig. 5 - Pl. II). These garments which seems to be made of fur or are a combination of rougher materials such as flanneling, later developed into a finer woven material with trimming and fringes decorating the edges and hems.

Generally only those of higher ranking(27) could afford to wear embroidered garments, which it is assumed included the Assyrian aristocracy or religious deities. The deities were often seen decorated in ritual processions, as depicted in the two figures of the Assyrian period (Fig. 39 - Pl. XXXII), representing



a



Fig. 38

- a) An Aramaeic fringed cloak from an Aramaeic basalt stele (8th Century BC).
Paris, Louvre
- b) Spinning woman, relief on an Aramaeic basalt stele from a grave at Marash (8th Century BC).
Turkey, Adana Museum



Fig. 39

Richly embroidered cloaks edged with fringes worn by two figures in a worship scene, on a Aramaeic gold pendant from Lake Van, Turkey (Assyrian period, 8th Century BC).
 Berlin, Staatliche Museen, No. 4634
 Diameter 4.6 cm

a priestess bringing offerings to the goddess. Both women's heads and bodies are covered with a precious embroidered garment and fringed cloak(28).

What was the pattern of the fringed cloaks which later became the jilbāb? Examining the illustration mentioned above suggests that they probably were made of a rectangular shape sometimes with round edges (Fig. 40a, b + c). Graffiti found in the house of Benuclelus(29) in Dura-Europos (c. 235-40 AD) shows a large rectangular mantle with fringed ends said to be priced at 23 demariti. In another graffiti, a linen cloak (2.87 x 1.62) is depicted, later to be found in the tower tomb of Lamlika (100-150 AD) and now preserved at the Dura-Europos Museum. This cloak, very similar to the Roman clavos, consists of gold stripes and fringed edges (Fig. 41) probably a standard pattern for the burūd and jilbābs before Islam.

This remarkable covering style in pre-Islamic arts, is relevant to Arab women in Assyrian, Hatran and Palmyran reliefs. From the 8th Century BC to the 3rd Century AD, illustrations provide us with various examples of cloaks: fringed, patterned, embroidered, either ankle-length, or fully encompassing. Although they illustrate the Greek himation, yet they represent

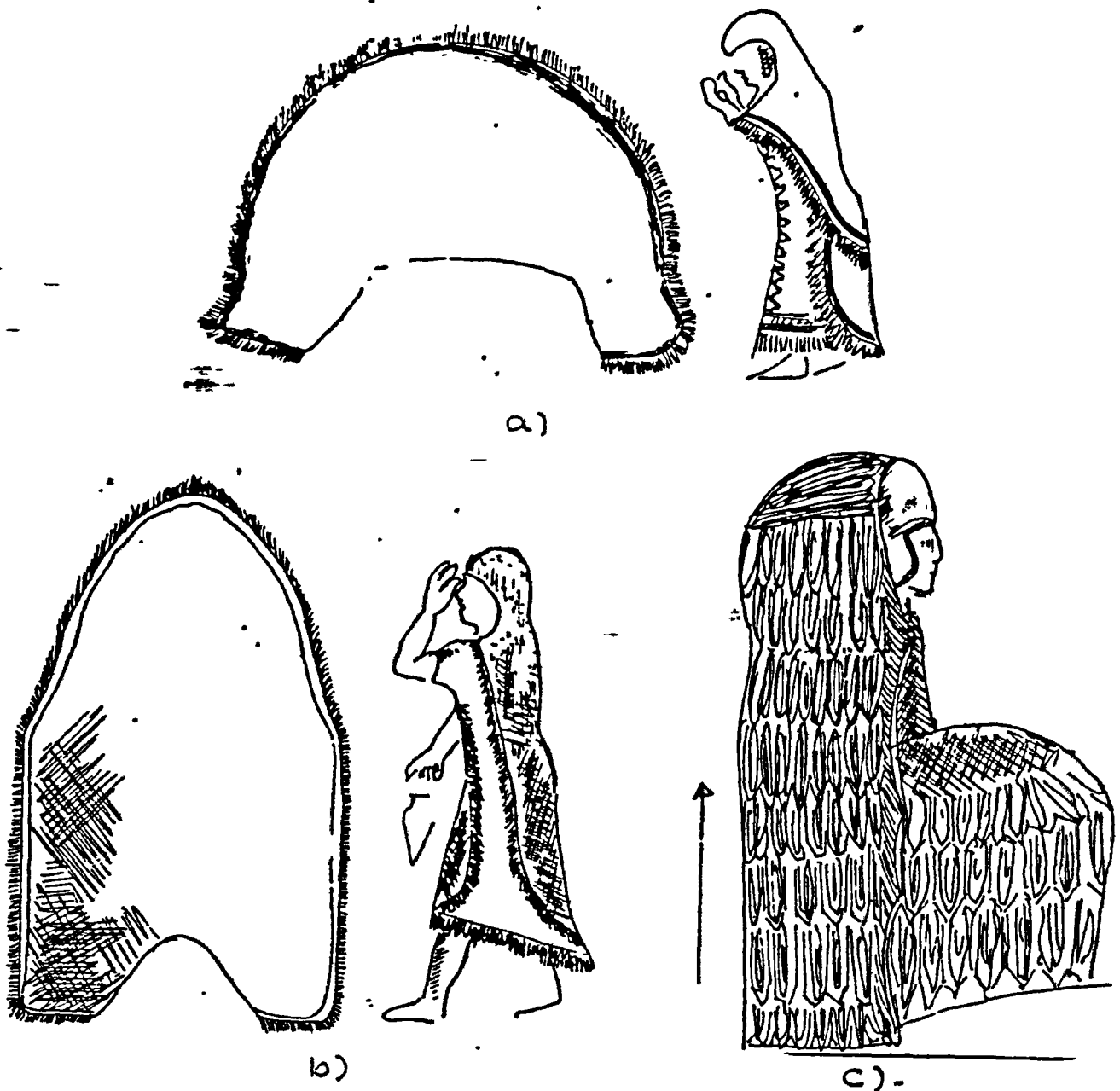


Fig. 40

- a) Pattern of the fringed cloak of the "Captive Woman" in a wall painting from Barsib. (cf. above, Fig. 9b) It shows the round edges of the mantle embroidered with fringes.
- b) Pattern of the cloak worn by the "Bedouin Queen" Samsi. (cf. above, Fig. 20) This plain cloak is probably made of camel's hair.
- c) Pattern and details of the fringed cloak and garment of the "Worshipper Queen" from Mari. (cf. above, Fig. 5) The domed turban is covered with a cloak, or polos, made of fringed lines of fur or wool-like material.

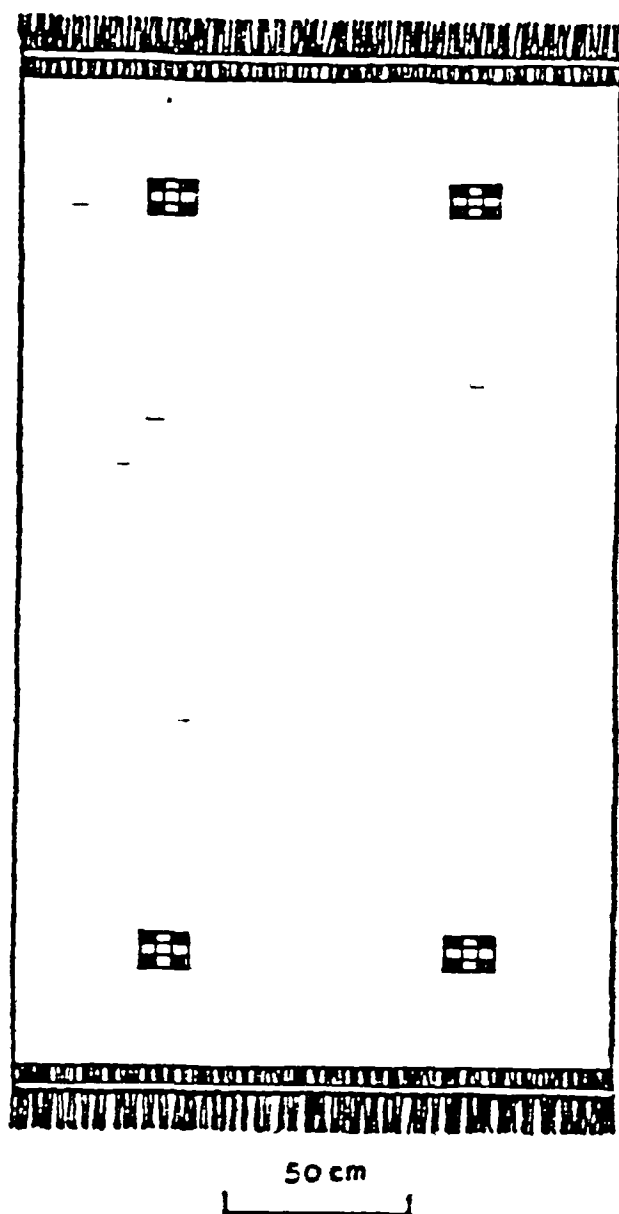


Fig. 41

Sketch of the fringed cloak or shawl from Lamlaka, Dura-Europos (100 BC - 50 AD).

[source: Pfister, Les Textiles de Palmyre, Paris (1934-40), Fig. 7]

the Arab tradition of complete covering (Fig. 22 - Pl. XVII). From the mid 1st Century AD, this simple Palmyran cloak is worn with a single, floor-length article between the head and cloak, rarely seen in the art of that period. Thereafter, women were normally depicted wearing two articles: a turban or diadem — between the head and cloak (Fig. 23 - Pls. XVIII, XIX). This head gear, which is Persian in origin, marked social distinction, seen often in Hatran art work (Fig. 11 - Pls. VII-IX) and at Dura-Europos (Figs. XVIII, XIX). Jāhiliya literature describes the various jilbābs and defines them as shamla, murt or milhafa, which refer either to the method of wearing them or to their material and colour.

Arab women(30) seemed to have followed the trend of their day, modifying it, however, to suit their traditional needs. They are represented in all their finery in examples such as the statues of Ubal, daughter of Jabal and Princess Dawshwari (Fig. 11 - Pl. IX) from Hatra, in which the cloak is worn over conical head gear and richly — embroidered garments. Alternatively, the cloak was drawn behind the back, or part of it draped on one shoulder, as seen in illustrations from Palmyra and Dura-Europos.

3. The Jilbab in Umayyad Arts

We have no archaeological evidence whatsoever from the Prophet's and the Rāshidūn period, to give us an idea of the style of the burūd and jalābīb of that time. The only source of reference are the descriptions in the Ḥadīth and Sunna literature. The earliest representations appear in the wall paintings on the arches on the sides of the Throne Hall of Quṣayr ʿAmra (86-96/684-705). These garments (Fig. 42a, b - Pl. XXXIII) are worn by two female figures, "Bacante" and "Fortuna". Both paintings are life-size and still in fairly good condition(31). The "Fortuna" picture has blue curtains hung horizontally behind the woman's head. Her cloak, in dark red colours, covers the head and body and falls down her back. This unique type of cloak resembles the jilbāb description given by the Jāhiliya poet, al-Mirār, who describes the beauty of his beloved girl in her jilbāb as if she is a "sun through clouds"(32). The artist of this painting most probably tried to depict the standard beauty of the ʿUmayyad period.



Fig. 42

Two figures (Fortuna and Baccante) wearing yellow dresses covered by a red mantle or cloak which falls behind the shoulder; wall paintings in Qusayr 'Amra, Jordan, early 8th Century AD. (see Plates XXXIIIa and b)

material such as khazz or silk which was preferred by the 'Umayyads. It is understood(37) that some areas continued their local weaving practises well after the Muslim conquest of Syria, thereby enabling the people of Makka and Madīna to enjoy just as luxurious life as the 'Umayyads in Syria (Fig. 43 - Pl. XXIV). This illustration probably represents one of the favoured entertainers of the 'Umayyad court. According to the historian, al-Mas'ūdī(38), there existed many such a favourite who had vast influence on the reigning caliph, as was the case with Caliph Yazīd II (101-5/720-24) and his favoured concubine Ḥabāba and singer Sallāma. The fantastic cloak worn by the female musician in this illustration corresponds to the numerous descriptions given by Kitāb al-Aghānī(39) on women singers and musicians at the 'Umayyad court: if, for example, a singer or dancer sufficiently pleased al-Walīd II (125-6/743-4), he would impulsively doff his rich garments and present them to her.

It seems also that women entertainers, whether musicians, singers or maids-of-honour in the caliph's chambers, or ladies-in-waiting at court, did not to cover their heads, preferring instead to draw their jilbāb (cloak) onto their shoulders while entertaining

"Fortuna's" jilbāb is a dark red, Bordeaux colour, still visible despite the age of the painting. This colour was favoured by the Prophet as well since 'Āīsha possessed a Qaṭarī dir or burūd made of red striped wool(33). Although "Fortuna's" jilbāb does not show any traces of stipes, it could be a murt, a form of jilbāb which the Anṣār women wore upon learning that the Prophet's wives ordered ḥijāb(34).

These cloaks were most probably made of khazz, which according to the historian al-Mas'ūdī(35), is a combination of silk and wool, characterised by its brilliant yellow and red colours favoured by the Umayyad Caliphs(36). It is interesting to note that the two illustrations bear these two colours, where the ridā'(dress) is of yellow, while the jilbāb is red.

Another interesting cloak illustration found in Qaṣayr 'Amra, decorates the south side of the soffits of the Eastern Arch of the Central Hall. Here, a seated Qūd (lute) player wears a brown cloak on her shoulders and covers her head with a small scarf ^{Fig.43)} (Pl. XXXIV). The design of this beautiful cloak, however, suggests it is more than just a simple wrap. It is sleeved with an embroidered border around the neck, pleating gently to suggest it is made of a soft



Fig. 43

A seated female musician dressed in a jilbāb placed directly over the shoulders. Traces of brown colour are still evident on the cloak. A curtain appears below the musician. Wall painting in Qusayr 'Amra, Jordan, early 8th Century AD. (see Pl. XXXIV)

their lords. The jilbāb in Fig. 43 - Pl. XXXV, resembles the one worn by the female lutist from Qasr al-Ḥayr al-Gharbī (Fig. 44 - Pl. XXXV), shown to be a brown, wide-sleeved cloak thrown on to the shoulder. The illustration at Qasr al-Ḥayr seems to have more detail than that at Qusayr 'Amra, this being only because one is far better preserved than the other. This jilbāb looks very much like the one on the servant in the "Bathroom Scene" in Qusayr 'Amra^{Fig. 45} (Pl. XXXV).

Another way the 'Umayyad court ladies wore their jilbāb is illustrated on a painting decorating the vault of the Central Hall in Qusayr 'Amra. Here, three women are seen to be fully covered, and wearing the jilbāb differently than the servants and musicians (entertainers) (Fig. 46 - Pl. XXXVII). Two of them seem to be in full dress (only the head of the third woman appears in view), wearing a wide-sleeved jilbāb (cloak) and khimār (head gear). Although the paintings are faded, it can be seen that these women are either coming out of doors or emerging from a building(40), suggesting the jilbāb they wear is one for out-of-doors. Also the twisted head cover around the face could be a khimār. A close examination of this illustration suggests that these two ladies are wearing



Fig. 44

A female musician wearing a brown ilbāb (cloak or mantle) placed over her shoulders. Traces of fringes are seen on the edges of one side of the garment. The folds of the garment suggest that it is probably made of a woollen material. From a floor painting from Qasr al-Ḥayr al-Gharbī, Syria, 8th Century AD. (see Pl. XXXV)
Damascus, National Museum.



Fig. 45

Detail of the figure of a "female servant" wearing a brown jilbāb placed directly on her shoulders. Notice the openings of the sleeves. From a wall painting in the Bath Hall of Qusayr 'Amra, Jordan, early 8th Century AD. (see Pl. XXXVI)



Fig. 46

Detail of three female figures, probably court ladies, fully covered with a red jilbāb and a black khimār. Wall painting from the Central Hall of Qusayr 'Amra, Jordan, early 8th Century AD. (see Pl. XXXVII)

both jilbāb and khimār, and that they are from the Caliph's family. As to colours, the cloak resembles the jilbāb in its dark red colour, with traces of a possible black khimār on the head.

These examples lead to the assumption that the jilbāb developed in the Umayyad period under the influence of local arts. What originated as a simple wrap of early Islamic period turned into a wide-sleeved cloak with a border or fringed edges, possibly embroidered or with an inscribed band added to it. Today, this latter styled cloak is identical to the traditional Arab cloak(41) worn by both men and women. The same pattern is used for either one, where two large rectangles are sewn together leaving only sleeve and neck openings edged with gold metal embroidery. Tassels of silk or gold thread are finish the garment off (Fig. 47 - Pl. XXXVIII). Hence, the jilbāb disappeared from historical records after the 'Umayyad era.

From the jilbāb came the Arab daffa, ḥabāya or bisht, the gillāba in Morocco, the chādūr in Persia, Afghanistan and Pakistan, and mīlāīya in Egypt. Other names were also developed depending on the historical or linguistic background in question, or the material used, or even how it was worn.

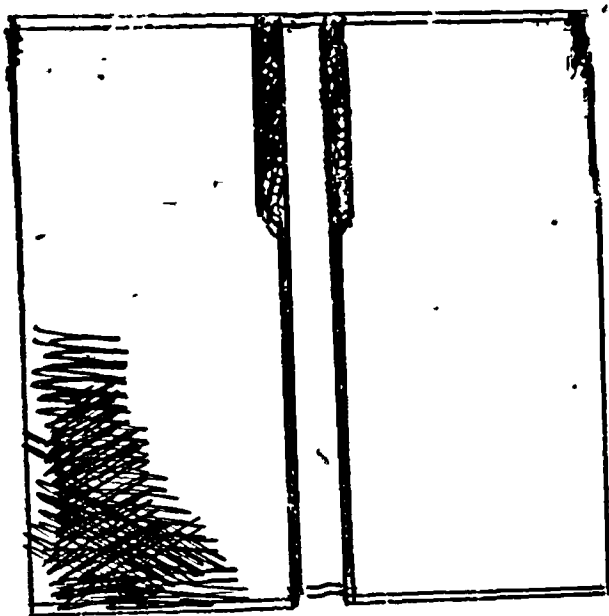


Fig. 47

Sketch of a traditional Arabian 'abā'a, still in use to this day. The bedouin Arab 'abā'a is usually made of rectangles of black or brown plain wool. (see pl. XXXVIII)

B) The Khimār

1. The Khimār and its Definition in the Qur'ān and Sunna Sources

"They should draw their khumur (veils) over their jīyūb (bosom) and not display their zīna (beauty) except to their husbands..."(42)

Khumur is the plural of khimār, which literally means a cloth covering the head or "a piece of cloth that covers the head and is twisted around part of the face(43)".

In classical lexicons, the khimār is defined as jilbāb(44), burqu(45), qinā(46), naṣīf(47) and sabb(48). As a jilbāb it is used as a wrap; as a burqu a veil; as a qinā it covers the face; naṣīf and sabb refer to the material used in it. The former is a translucent cloth, while the latter is a white linen cloth(49). All these definitions depend on how the khimār is worn or what material it is made of. Yet another definition of it is khamra (wine), where wine-making is known as ta-khammur after khimār, a closely concealed process, and the drinking of which "conceals" one from reality and reason. A man's turban may be called a khimār only if he covers his head as a woman does with the khimār(50). Khimār is also a

handkerchief(51) or kerchief made of translucent(52) material. Generally speaking, nasif(53) is everything that covers the woman.

The khimār, therefore, is any long, rectangular scarf or veil covering the head and lower face, leaving only the eyes and all (or part of) the nose exposed. Usually the head is covered with one part of this cloth. The other is turned under the chin to cover the bosom; the end is draped over one shoulder, falling loosely behind the back. Jiyūb (pl. of jalyb) literally means the collar or neck of a dress. This sometimes refers to the dir^c (dress) itself, or the gamīṣ(54) (tunic). According to the Sūra quoted at the beginning, it is "Both a woman's dress and collar".

It is understood that the khimār is a head covering smaller thanⁿ a jilbāb, but larger than a burqu, and used with the jilbāb for out of doors. Also, the khimār(55) is a covering used with the ordinary dir^c (dress) to substitute using the jilbāb indoors. It can be of any colour, and of soft material, designed for women of all ages and classes to wear.

Traditional sources(56) describe how women in the Jāhiliyya "wore their jīyūb (bodices and collars) so

wide that they exposed most of their bosom. They used to adorn themselves with pearls, and walked in public displaying themselves to men. This is why the Qur'ān revealed the Sura in which he asked women to cover themselves and be modest."

Dhū al-khimār (masc.)(57) was an unusual title, originating from the poet al-Aswad al-ʿAnasī who used to cover his head with his mother's khimār to give encouragement during tribal fighting. Women were referred to as dhāt al-khimār, the most famous of whom was Hind, grandmother of the poet al-Farazdaq. She is said to have taken off her khimār among close relatives only as a sign of her pride and honour. The poet al-ʿAḡshā(58), described the khimār as a "white head cover" calling it ridāʿ, while another Jāhiliya poet, Tarfa(59), called it qināʿ - his lost time when he was concealed from reality. The poet al-Mirār(60), who previously described the jilbāb, mentioned how the khimār was worn in the description of his beloved whom he believed knew best how it was wrapped around the face.

It seems Jāhiliya women were familiar in wearing the khimār in their own style. Women should not forget or let their khimār fall or be drawn aside by

tiredness, especially when walking around the Ka'ba. The poets al-Hārith al-Makhzūmī(61) and 'Umar Ibn Abi Rabi'ah(62) confirm this in their poems. Taking off the khimār and showing an uncovered head symbolised deep sorrow, as described by the poet Ṣakhar(63), brother of al-Khansā'. The khimār came to symbolise marriage and distinction, segregating noble, married women from the unmarried or lower classed or slave women. It was unusual for women to neglect their khimār and let it fall in the presence of men, or in ritual processions(64).

The version of Zamakhsharī, describing how Jāhiliyya women drew the khimār behind the shoulders, seems an unusual habit related to the hijāb(65), one which was most likely only practised shortly before Islam.

The khimār in pre-Islamic times was not only used among Arab women in Hijāz and Syria, but also among Hebrew and Christian(66) women. In Roman times, veiled women were presumed to be married Jewish or Christian women. The Old Testament relates how the veil was used in the 19th Century BC by Rebekkah, when chosen to be Isaac's wife: "For she had said unto the servant, "What man is this that walk in the field to meet us?" And

the servant had said, 'It is my master'. Therefore, she took a veil and covered herself(67)." It seems possible that the bridal veil started from the time of Rebekkah. The Prophet's tribe, 'i' . Quraish. (68), used to ritually paraded their unmarried girls around the Kaaba to find them suitors, which once achieved, would then be promptly re-veiled again forever. Khadija(69), the Prophet's first wife who testified the nature of revelation, had learnt from her Christian uncle that women should veil themselves in the presence of angels(70).

The Hadith advises Muslim girls to wear the khimār only with their ordinary dress at prayer time(71), while the Qur'ān merely asks them to mend their way of wearing it and not purchase a special one. The simple, ordinary one suffices their needs. Wearing the khimār was a habit every mature woman had to adopt. Arabs gave many examples in their proverbs(72) on this matter, such as: "An elderly woman is in no need to learn to fix the khimār". To enable Muslim women to take part in social activities, Islam asked them to avoid adornment and wear an ordinary khimār with which they would be regarded not as wealthy, noble ladies, but as simple Muslim women. Muslims seem to have

continued wearing the khimār just as in the former Jāhiliyya times. This is why 'Umar(73), who observed hijāb, is reported to have prevented his slave girls from wearing the khimar. This was not, as the report said, to prevent them from resembling free women, but more likely to avoid noble women from being mistaken as an 'ama (slave girl). Aristocracy and nobility were 'Umar's interpretation of hijāb. He even objected to the Prophet permitting unrestricted mingling of his wives and visitors at home, advising him to preferably draw a curtain between them to avoid any direct contacts. It was also pointed out to the Prophet that visitors should not be permitted to enter his home at all times. Later, when 'Umar became caliph, he strictly enforced the hijāb practised by the Prophet's wives.

Islam has accepted khimār to be a form of hijāb, since it has served the basic needs of hijāb. Other articles such as qinā' (face coverings) were regarded as unnecessary. In the 'Umayyad times, close relatives to the Prophet, such as his grand-daughter Sukayna bint al-Ḥussain or his cousin 'Ā'isha bint Talḥa, used to unveil their faces in Hijāz(74). Also Saḥāb(75), daughter of 'Abd al-Muṭṭalib, the Prophet's uncle, was

This style corresponds with the Sūra which says:

- "They should draw their khumur (veils) over their jīyūb (bosoms) (79).

The women seem to be aristocratic wearing good quality khimārs. _

While the above suggests the image of a khimār, another rendering from the same period showing a woman with a well twisted khimār around her face (Fig. 48) appears on a fragment of a wall painting from Khirbat al-Mafjar (80), another 'Umayyad palace in the Jordanian desert. This khimār seems to be patterned light purple or dark pink on a dark red background; one end of the khimār is clearly thrown over the shoulder. Unfortunately, however, most of the painting has been damaged, making it difficult to identify any further details.

Historians (81) believe the 'Umayyads used a material called khazz, a combination of wool and silk, as well as īqirīj (82), a brightly coloured material. The caliphs greatly favoured yellow and red, colours which they reserved exclusively for themselves only. Green khazz or hishāmī (83) was produced in memory of Caliph Hishām, in whose time also the raqam (84) (an embroidered khazz) was extensively produced. (Fig. 49).



Fig. 48

A woman wearing a patterned red and black khimār; detail of a wall painting from Khirbat al-Mafjar, Jordan, 1st half of the 8th Century AD.

Jerusalem, Archaeological Museum

[source: Hamilton, Khirbat al-Mafjar, Oxford (1959), Pl. XCVIII]



Fig. 49

Detail of the central part of the wall painting on the face of the right aisle of the Great Hall, Qusayr 'Amra, Jordan, early 8th Century AD. (Note the two small figures in the lower right hand corner)

[source: Almagro et al., Qusayr 'Amra, Madrid (1975), Pl. XIV]

Other examples of veiled women in Qusayr ʿAmra (Fig. 50 - Pl. XXXIX), depict three women inside a tent, wearing easily identifiable khimārs. The tent is most probably the caliph's which bears a crescent and flag to symbolise his private property - he appears to have taken his harīm on a hunting trips(85). The Umayyad court seems to have adopted this practise from Sassanid traditions, often referred to by Greek writers. In pre-Islamic times as well, Arab women regularly accompanied their menfolk to tribal wars, just as in Islamic times, when they went along to nurse the wounded and feed the soldiers.

3. Evidence of the Khimār in the Arts of the Pre-Islamic Period

It is necessary now to examine the possible application and artistic representation of the khimār in pre-Islamic times. Tracing it in the arts of this period is no easy task, since practically no proof exists to support it. Searching among Palmyran and Hatran reliefs were all in vain as most Palmyran and Hatran women are shown wearing cloaks only. We can, therefore, ask ourselves, could we consider these simple cloaks as khimārs? Linguistically, the khimār



Fig. 50

Three women wearing a dark khimār closely twisted around the face. Detail of a wall painting depicting a "Hunting Scene", Qusayr 'Amra, Jordan, early 8th Century AD. (see Pl. XXXIX)

is defined as jilbāb or burquʿ, therefore, certain cloaks could be, with some reservations, regarded as khimār. This can be applied to Fig. 29 - Pl. XXIII, where a Palmyran woman has twisted her khimār under the chin in a remarkable attire. And in Fig. 28 - Pl. XXIV, another Palmyran woman has thrown her veil over the shoulder.

Interpreters(86) of those Qur'ānic verses relevant to the khimār have given evidence of its disappearance during the Jāhiliya, when the women used to walk in public drawing their khimār behind the back to reveal their fineries and ~~face~~ ^{face}. This fact is itself depicted in some of the Palmyran and Hatran art works.

Earlier than the Hatran and Palmyran reliefs, is an Assyrian relief from Khorsabad(87) (Fig. 51), depicting an Arab woman from Gaza with a fringed khimār on her head. It is wrapped well around her face with one end hanging behind the shoulder onto the back. Such a rare illustration of Arabs indicates that the khimār was also an Arab habit.

Even earlier and rarer examples of khimārs come from an ivory panel from Magido(88), Canaan or Palestine (13th Century BC) (Fig. 52) which depicts a woman wearing a short head covering similar to the khimār.



Fig. 52

A woman or goddess wearing a short veil on her head; detail of a Magido Ivory from Palestine (dated 1350-1150 BC). London, British Museum, No. A22258
Height 203 mm



Fig. 51

Detail of Fig. 8a showing an Arab woman, probably from Gaza, wearing a fringed, closely wound khimār around her face. (see above, Fig. 8a)

Another representation appears on a limestone figure from Larsa (3rd millennium BC) in the Louvre, Paris, portraying a kneeling Elamite woman (Fig. 53). Again, she seems to be wearing a short, fine piece of material on her head which hangs down her back, rather like the khimār. This is probably the earliest representation of a khimār in the ancient Near East. The khimār seems to have lasted as an Arab tradition from the Assyrian era (8th Century BC) up to the end of the 13th century AD. One painting from the Maqāmāt of al-Ḥarīrī (89) (634/1237) (Fig. 54) shows a bedouin woman tending camels and wearing a khimār just like the Assyrian rendering of the Arab woman. This explains why the khimār is mentioned with names such as burqu', niqāb, etc. in Jāhiliyya poetry and appears in 'Umayyad art only to disappear with the development and urbanisation (90) of the Islamic state. Bedouins, however, retained its use until later Islamic times.

2. The Hijāb as a Seclusion, the Sitāra

A) The Sitāra, its Definition and Introduction into Islam

"Ask them from behind a hijāb (screen) (91)"

Hijāb in this verse literally means screen or curtain, the equivalent Arabic word of which is sitr.



Fig. 53

terra cotta figurine of a Sumerian woman represented in a state of worship, covering her head with a short veil. This could be the earliest representation of of the khimār in the arts of the pre-Islamic period; from Larsa (3000-2900 BC), Paris, Louvre
[source: 'Ukāsha, al-Fann al-'Irāqī, Beirut (1977), p. 133, Pl. 179]



Fig. 54

An example of the late 'Abbāsīd khimār: a bedouin woman in a miniature in a MS. of al-Ḥarīrī's Maqāmāt, painted by al-Wāsiṭī and dated 634/1237.

Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale, MS. Arabe 5847, fol. 101r
138 x 260 mm

Painted by al-Wāsiṭī (138 x 260mm)

MS. Arabe 5847, Folio 101

Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris

Sitr refers directly to curtains, screen and partition, while hijāb refers indirectly of it. This Qur'ānic verse issued a protocol on etiquette to the Prophet's wives. Hijāban mastūran (hidden curtain) expresses a mysterious significance. The unbelievers said to the Prophet, "Our hearts are concealed and in our ears is heaviness, and between us and there is hijāb (veil)(92)". "We place between there and those who do not believe in the world to come hijāban mastūran (93)". Both these terms mean an invisible curtain sent by Allah to conceal the Prophet from the eyes of those who sought to kill him(94), and a veil which dimmed the intelligence of renegades so that they were incapable of understanding the recitation of the Qur'ān(95). Hijāb as sitr, is a curtain, veil or garments, with astār and sitūr being the plurals of it, to mean coverings, curtains and garments(96).

Sitāra(97) is to cover, to hide with a veil or curtain; to conceal; to shield; to guard and protect(98). Arms and shields are called sitrā(99) because they protect the person.

Astār of the Kaaba(100) are the Kaaba coverings, just as kiswā of the Kaaba(101). Kiswa is translated as kisrut in Hebrew(102). All have one meaning, which

is the covering cloth or covering garments. The Persian chādūr(103), which may derive from the Arabic satūr, has the same meaning. Both chādūr and purda are equivalent to the Arabic hijāb, which is defined as curtains, garments and seclusion, while sitr refers to curtain only. Both the dress codes of jilbāb and khimār have already been previously examined, whereby now we will proceed to concentrate on sitāra.

Sitāra as a partition or curtain, appears to have been unknown to the early inhabitants of Hijāz. Its introduction into Islam came about through the influence of ‘Umar who advised the Prophet on his wedding day to Zaynab, daughter of Jaḥash (3/625), saying, "O Apostle of ‘Allah, there come into Thy house men who may be simple or wicked. It were well if you commanded the veil of the Mothers of Believers(104)." Commentators like ‘Ibn Kathīr(105), have related the revelation of this verse to this incident. In those early days of hijra, the people of Hijāz were not accustomed to draw sitūr (curtains) across their main doors, and had no partitions inside their houses. Another incident relates how when the Prophet first migrated to Madīna, a lady named ‘Āsmā’, daughter of Marthad(106), used to send food to the Prophet and his

companions. 'Asmā' noticed that no curtains hung in the Prophet's house, who seemed rather annoyed at mass of people who freely entered his home at all times of the day, and took it upon herself to make him aware of this matter. With that, the Qur'ān was to later advise people to seek permission before entering the Prophet's house and that he should partition or curtain his home for more privacy. In so doing, the Qur'ān also revealed to the people how to draw curtains and put up partitions in their own houses.

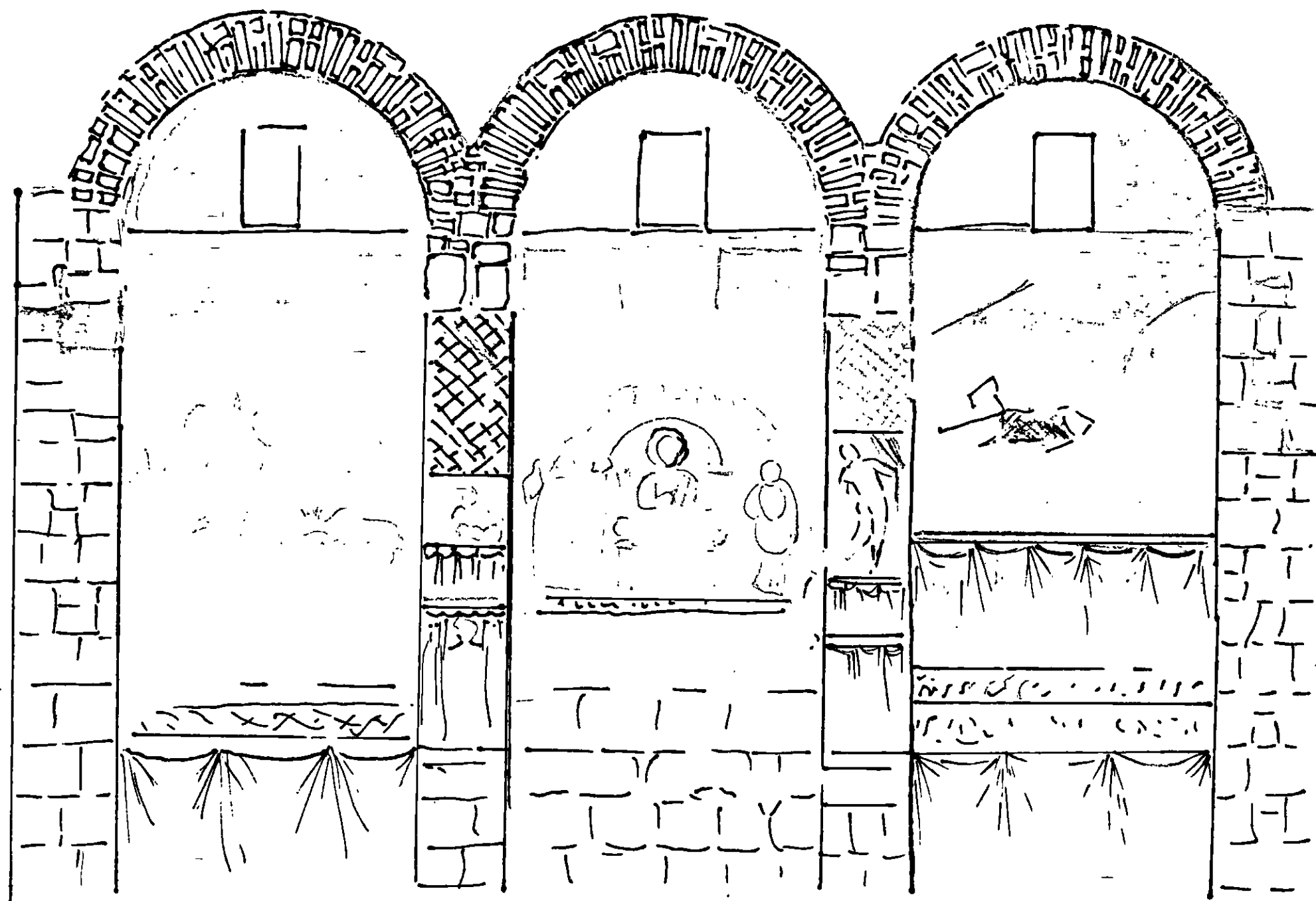
The curtains used in the Prophet's house were made of ʿādam (soft hide)(107), also used by the Hījāz people to cover the Kaʿba(108) with. With the expansion of Islam and subsequent prosperity of the state(109) and people, curtains and partitions(110) become more apparent in most houses. Originally, when it became common knowledge that the Prophet had been ordered by the Qur'ān to draw a curtain in his house(111), other Muslims simply followed in unison and drew curtains in their houses as well.

The use of the sitāra(112) which had been introduced at the time of the 'Umayyads, had connections with hijāb. Muḥāwīya, for example, and the majority of his successors were separated from their households

by sitāra, to prevent the latter from seeing the caliph under the influence of alcohol, when he could no longer control himself. This sitāra was to become even more complicated as court life developed, particularly where the caliph's wives were concerned.

The earliest representations of the sitāra appear in the 8th century wall paintings of Qusayr ʿAmra (fig. 55). The large number of these representations (the only evidence of their kind for that period) has confused many historians of Islamic art. Many of these paintings depict the typical ḥarīm life at the ʿUmayyad court. This palace, as well as all the other ʿUmayyad desert palaces, was specifically built for the Caliph's leisure time. Here he could come hunting accompanied by his ḥarīm and court entertainers to spend some time away from the responsibilities of the state, a fact well documented by the wall paintings (113).

One painting we may call the "Bath Scene" shows an unidentified person looking from behind a curtain (Fig. 56 - Pl. XL). This figure could be the prince's wife or a favourite concubine (114), identified by the necklace she wears which is identical to one worn by another figure behind a curtain (Fig. 57 - Pl. XLI). Also the sequence of



1 Fig. 55

Representations of the sitāras; wall painting in Qusayr
Amra, Jordan (early 8th Century AD).

[source: Musil, Kusejr Amra, Vienna (1902), Pl. VIII]

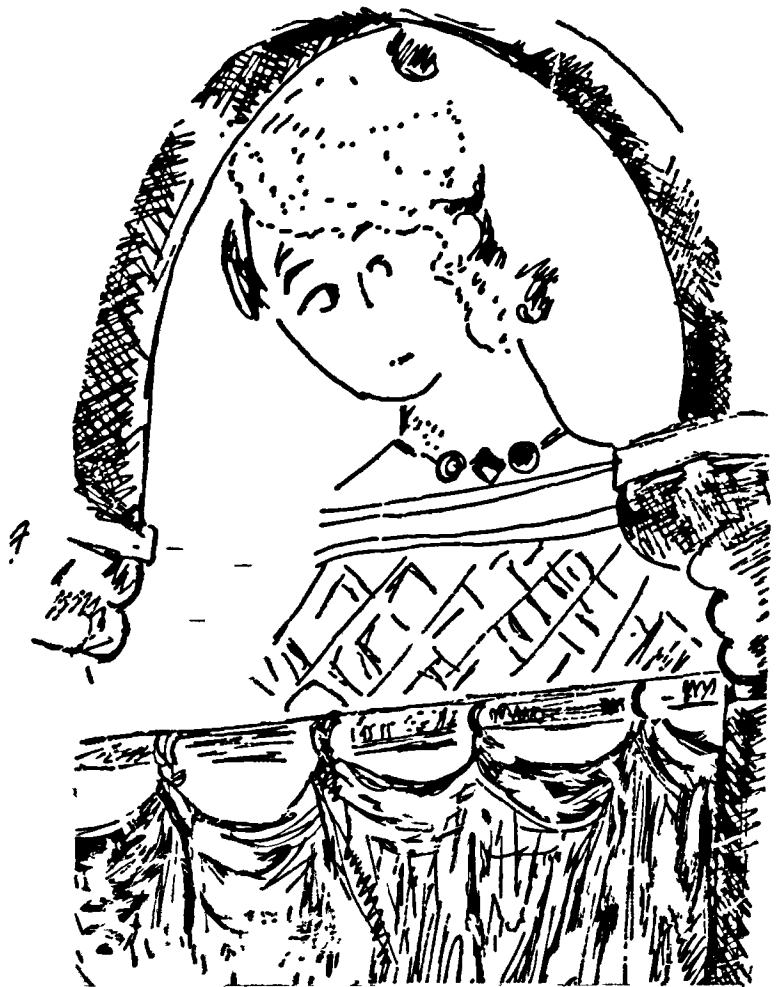


Fig. 56

Figure looking from behind a curtain; detail of a wall painting from Qusayr 'Amra, Jordan, early 8th Century AD. (see Pl. XL)
[source: Almagro et al., Qusayr 'Amra, Madrid (1975), Pl. XX]

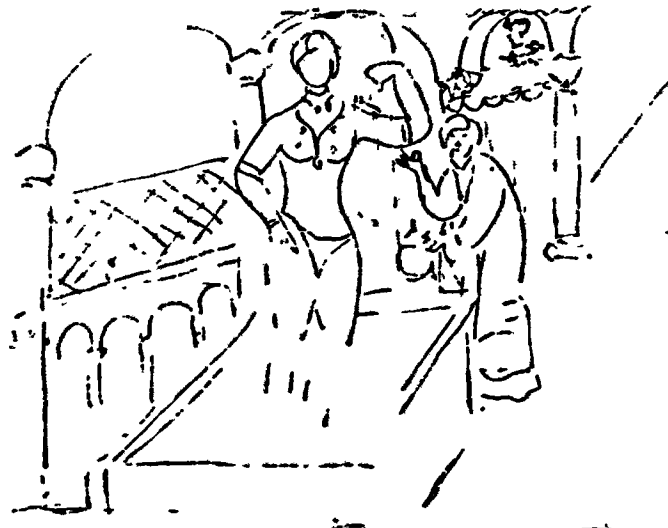


Fig. 57

The prince's beloved wearing a necklace; detail of the "Bath Scene", wall painting in Qusayr 'Amra, Jordan, early. 8th Century AD. (see Pl. XLI)
[source: ibid., Pl. XIX]

the paintings from right to left on the same panel, plus the numerous representations of curtains, makes it logical to assume that this figure behind the curtain is the prince's wife or beloved preparing to enter her bathroom (Pl. XLII).

Another sitāra painting, in the same palace, depicts a female musician (Fig. 43 - Pl. XXXIV) wearing a jilbāb. She seems to be in the prince's presence, assumed from the representations of sitāra in the bottom of the picture.

Both the above mentioned sitāras are painted in blue and hung on wooden rails with rings, used as partitions that could be easily drawn open and closed rather than hanging drapes pulled up and down.

Curtains were drawn not only indoors, but on journeys as well, where distinguished ladies travelled in confined and curtained litters. It is reported in the incident of "Ifk" (5/627) how 'Ā'isha travelled in a fully covered litter(115). Later, in the Rāshidūn(116) period, this was strictly observed as the sitāra of the Prophet's wife.

The 'Umayyads(117) also seem to have introduced both indoor and outdoor sitāra for their distinguished ladies.

Before the coming of Islam, Arabs were already covering their women, deities and the Holy Ka'ba, further examples of which were mentioned in Jāhiliya poetry. One incident relates how Khaṭla, daughter of al-Ázwar, had cried out in battle: "I am a lady of sitūr(118)," meaning she was distinguished veiled lady. Other such examples, show why Islam introduced sitāra specifically for the Prophet's wives only. In practising sitāra of women, the 'Umayyads followed the Syrian Arab tradition which they later came to develop into seclusion.

Sitāra symbolising the harīm started, therefore, in the 'Umayyad court and was probably unheard of in Hijāz at the same time. Examples of sitāra in Dura-Europos (1st Century AD) appear frequently on funerary art reliefs, where it is depicted either on its own or in front of a figure (Fig. 58). One interesting fresco from there (c. 250 AD) shows Moses being rescued from the water by the Pharoah's daughter; to the left of the scene the child is handed to his mother with a white sitāra hanging over them (Fig. 59 - Pl. XLIII).

This beautiful representation of a curtain hung over women wearing veils on their heads corresponds



Fig. 58 Figure of a woman standing behind a curtain; Dura-Europos
(c. 250 AD)
Damascus, National Museum

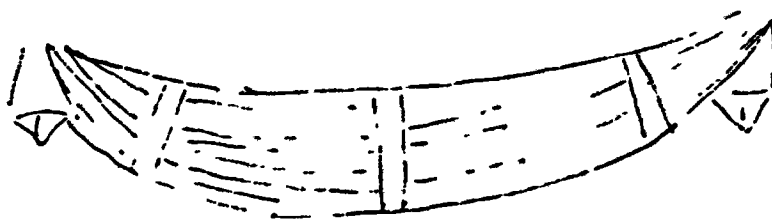


Fig. 59 Curtain (sitāra) hanging over Pharaoh's daughter; detail of
a wall painting from Dura-Europos (c. 250 AD)
(see Pl. XLIII)
Damascus, National Museum
[source: Seibert, Women in the Ancient Near East, Leipzig
(1974), p. 61]

with the Jāhiliya term "sitūr" named after the women's, Kaaba and litter coverings. It is at this point, interesting to note that all the fully covered women illustrated in Qusayr ʿAmra are of Arab origin, suggested by the camel processions that appear alongside them (Fig. 60 - Pl. XLIV).

Drawing curtains and fully covered women was favourite theme of the Jāhiliya symbolising honour. These women were either fully covered (see the Palmyra-Baʿl procession, Fig. 21 - Pl. XV) or partially veiled with fringed cloaks (see the Zabibi, Assyrian reliefs, Fig. 20).

Arab women were in fact always depicted with camels (domedaries), as seen in the Baʿl procession scene, where the leading camel carries a high pavilion resting on an ornate camel rug, enhanced with intricate patterns and green and yellow colouring. Another camel scene (Fig. 61) is illustrated with just as much detail as this one.

What materials were used for sitūr curtains? As we previously discovered, the Prophet's first curtain was made of ʿadam (hide), with preceding curtains made out of wool. According to Jāhiliya poets, one such covering, the hawdaj, was striped or patterned.

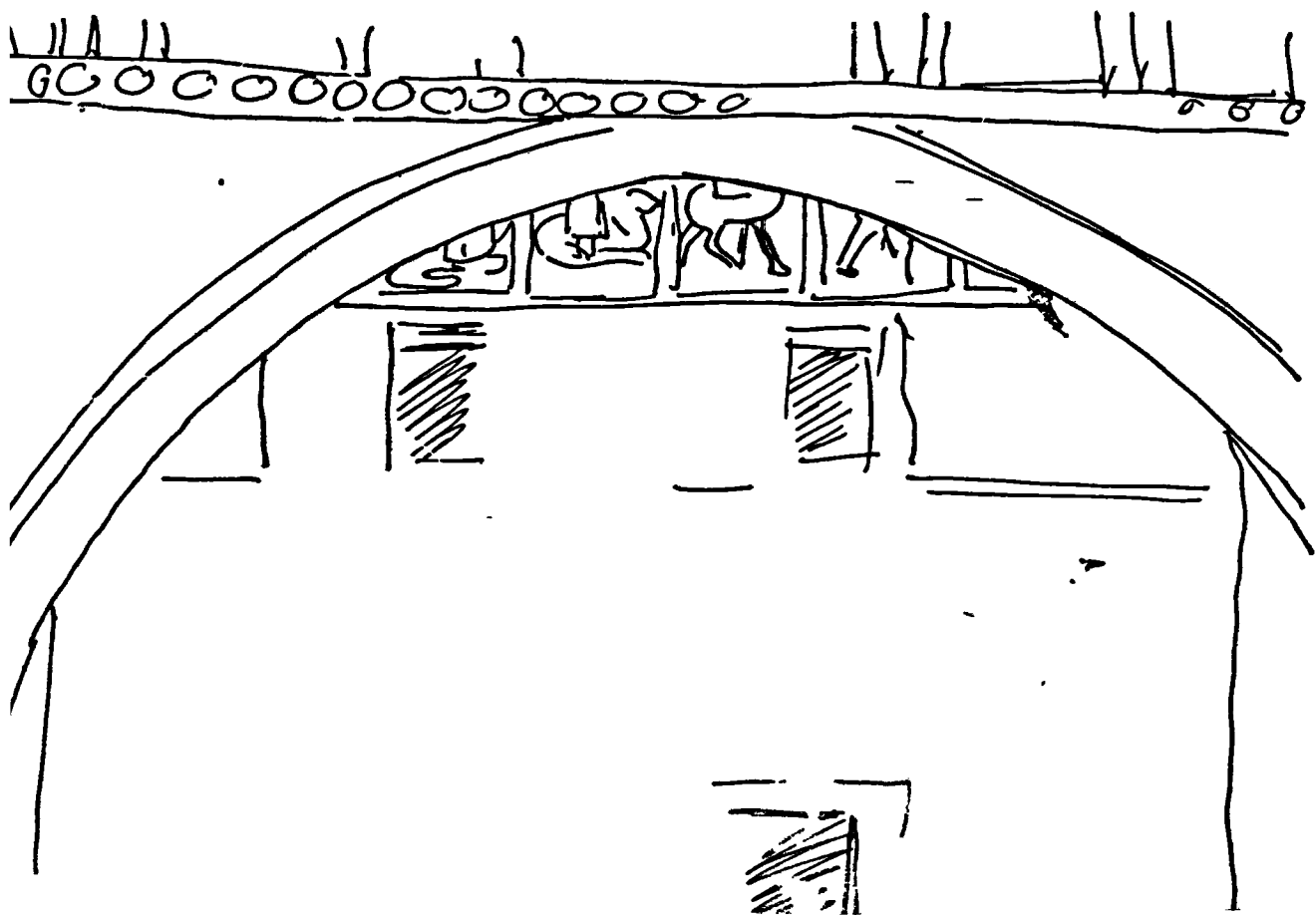


Fig. 60

Camel carrying goods and covered with rugs; from a painting decorating the arch in the Women's Quarter, Qusayr 'Amra, Jordan, early 8th Century AD. (see Pl. XLIV)

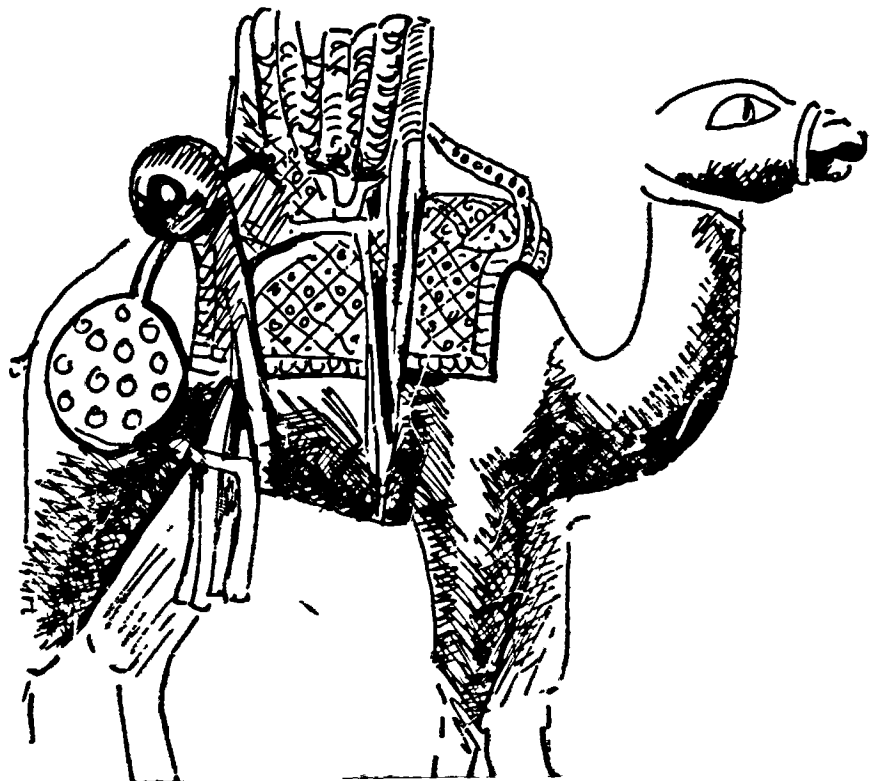
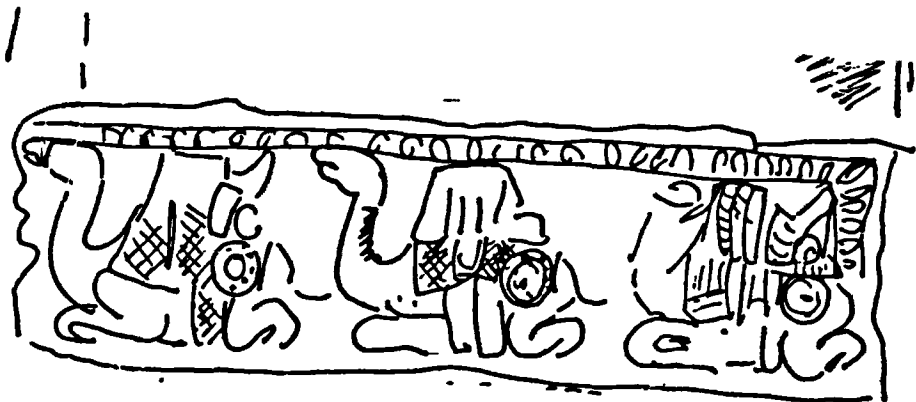


Fig. 61

- a) Rugs and litter coverings on a monumental base with three reclining dromedaries; relief from Palmyra (150-250 AD).
Palmyra, Museum, No. A24/1226
Height 37 cm
- b) A dromedary covered with richly decorated rugs on a funerary stone relief with a banqueting scene; Palmyra (early 3rd Century AD).
Palmyra, Museum, No. 2093/7431
Height 75 cm

ḡbqarf was the literal term given to the hawda (litter) coverings mentioned in Jāhiliya poetry. These were red, striped and patterned(119) and made of goat hair, named after the Yemeni area(120) in which the coloured rugs and clothes were made and embroidered. The Prophet and his companion ʿUmar also prayed on an ḡbqarf, which is also described in the Qurʾān(121) as "the beautiful coverings and rugs of Paradise". From this verse, we learn how the camel pavilions were greatly cherished by the Arabs. During the ʿUmayyad times, the litters used to be covered with either hibrāt linen or ḡsab, all fine material products from Yemen.

Such a fine material was used for sitāra in Qusayr ʿAmra as well, where a blue and probably silk material (silk because it folded and hung so elegantly), very much different to those found in Palmyra. Here, one example from Dura-Europos (3rd Century AD) shows a woman covered with a long cloak behind a white sitāra.

The curtain depicted in all these illustrations is always suspended behind a figure (mostly female) at or above shoulder height, supported by two circular pins or rosettes and a pair of palm leaves rising above it, often curving inwards. This is adapted from Roman

religious and funerary art (c. 100 AD) found only in Roman Syria . . . The curtain in Palmyran art, seems symbolise either "the interior of the deceased eternal house", or "the glorious garment with which the deceased's spirit will be wrapped", or the symbol of "paradise"(122).

D) The Sitāra and the Harīm

Seclusion of women behind curtains or in the temples was an ancient Semitic custom. The Babylonians, for example, used to seclude virgins and priestesses in their temples. The Qur'ān(123) relates how the Virgin Mary, in prayer, went into seclusion from her people to a private eastern chamber, and drew a curtain.

Screening of women, was therefore an ancient harīm custom, which spread far and wide with the course of time(124). The Assyrian king, Ninurta-tukul-Ashur (12th Century BC) had entertained a comparatively small harīm of approximately forty women, while the Sassanid king, Khusraw (531-579) had one of the largest harīms, numbering to twelve thousand young girls and women.

One rare portrayal, however, depicts the Sassanid queen in Naqsh-i-Rostum(125) (224-241) unveiled behind a

curtain or an enclosure (Fig. 13) which screens her from the men. Historians have recorded that women travelled in closely covered litters(126) as well. Not only did the royal court have its harīm, but also high-ranking officials had smaller versions of one. In time, hijāb in the sense of sitāra came to refer to the harīm, which in turn is defined as those parts of the house inaccessible to men, or more specifically the women's quarters. Arab women in the Jāhiliya times enjoyed considerably more freedom compared to the Assyrians and Persians.

With the coming of Islam, and the subsequent introduction of sitāra, a Qur'ānic verse came to be revealed specifically for the Prophet's wives:

"Ask them from behind a hijab (curtain)" and "qarna (stay) in your houses(127)". This was elaborated upon by the 'Umayyads who interpreted sitāra to mean the Prophet's wives' hijāb (curtain), which in turn was to be applied to the secluding the women's court from public. This system which owed its origins to the earlier Syrian civilisations, suited the 'Umayyad traditions well. In Hijāz, however, the Muslims retained all the original meaning and significance of the early Islamic traditions of hijāb, as introduced by the Qur'ān and practised in the Prophet's time.

NOTES ON CHAPTER IV

- (1) The Holy Qur'ān, Ahzāb (Confederates), Sūra 33:59.
- (2) Lane, E. W., Arabic-English Lexicon, 2 vols. (1865), Vol. I, p. 440.
- (3) *ibid*
- (4) *ibid*
- (5) The poet Hassān Ibn Thābit had criticised the position of the immigrants in Madina (5th year of Hijra) ... in which he called them jalā-bīb (brought from another country). Diwān, Hassān Ibn Thābit, reviewed by Hasan Kāmil al-Šīaraffī, 2-vols., Cairo (1974), p. 160. Muḥiṣ defines jilbāb as "the slave merchant or the garment of the slave merchant". Dozy, R., Takmilat al-Šifā, Baghdad (no date), Vol. 2, p. 342.
- (6) Ibn Manẓūr, Lisān al-ʿArab, Vol. 9, p. 395.
- (7) "djilāba", Dozy, R., Supplement Aux Dictionnaires Arabes, Leiden, Brill (1881).
- (8) Lexicons such as Šaḥīḥ al-Lughā and Qāmūs.
- (9) "Milā'a", Zabīdī, Tāj al-ʿArūs and Lane's opp. cit., Vol. 1, p. 410.
- (10) "jalbaba", Lisān al-ʿArab.
- (11) "jilbāb", Qāmūs and Lane's, opp. cit.
- (12) . , Šaḥīḥ Muslim (1290 AH).
Sunnan Abū Dawūd, Vol. 2, p. 382.
- (13) Tafsīr al-Qurṭubī, Vol. 14, p. 241.
- (14) Wherry, The Translation of the Qur'ān, The Nūr Sūra, London (1896), Vol. 3, p.185.
- (15) Tafsīr al-Qurṭubī, op cit., p. 241.
- (16) Ṭabarī, Annales, p. 1520.
- (17) Šaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī, Vol. 2, p. 195.
- (18) Šaḥīḥ Muslim, Vol. 1, p. 148.

- (19) Lyall, Mufaddaliyāt, Vol. 2, p. 49
 "Ye, thou wouldst think that
 the sun hidden in her jilbab".
- (20) Dozy, R., Sup. Aux. Dict., pp. 122-124.
- (21) *ibid*
- (22) Reuben, Alfred, History of Jewish Costume (1974), p. 5.
- (23) Old Testament, Exodus, 22:27.
 Reuben, Alfred, The History of Jewish Costumes, London
 (1974), p.
- (24) Serjeant, R. B., Material for History of Islamic Textiles, Beirut
 (1972) - "burd" Yamani, p. 130.
 Marmorstein, G., "The Veil in Judaism and Islam", Journal of
 Jewish Studies, Vol. V (1954), pp. 1-11.
- (25) Madhloom cites that the:
 "Abāiya, the long veil are not found on the Assyrian
 reliefs earlier than the time of Tiglat-Pileser III (9th
 Century BC)". The Neo-Assyrian Art, London (1970), p.
 73.
- (26) Seibert, I, Women in Ancient Near-East, Leipzig (1974), p. 56.
- (27) *op cit.*, p. 64.
- (28) *op . cit.*, p. 41.
- (29) Colledge, M., The Art of Palmyra, London (1976), p. 99.
 Pfister, R., Les Textiles des Palmyre, 3 vols. in one,
 Paris (1934, 1937, 1940), Vol. 2, p. 15.
- (30) Madhloom, *op . cit.*, p. 20, called this cloak abaya, which
 I am not sure of its Assyrian origin. A relief from
 Hitti (c. 1400 BC) provides earlier examples of this
 cloak.
- (31) Ettinghausen, R., Arab Painting, Geneva (1962), pp. 19-41. For the
 illustrations of the Bacante and Fortuna: two female
 figures representing a Bacante and Fortuna framed in arches
 situated at the sides of the front of the Throne Rooms; see
 Almagro *et al.*, Qusayr 'Amra, Residencia y Baños Omeyas en
 el Desierto de Jordania, Madrid (1975). Pl IXa.

- (32) Dīwān Turafa Ibn al-ʿAbid, transl. by Max Seligsohn, Paris (1901).
- (33) Qatarī red striped cloaks, Serjeant, *op. cit.*, p. Qatar, Lisān al- Arab and Qāmūs al-Muḥīṭ. Musnad Ibn Ḥanbal, Vol. 3, p. 262.
- (34) Namar, al-Maraʾ al-Muslīma "The Muslim Woman", p. 98. According to Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim, p. 36.
- (35) Mascūdī, Murūj al-Dḥaḥab, 4 vols., Cairo (1958), Vol. 3, pp. 184-85.
- (36) ʿIbn al-Zubair, Dḥakāʾir al-Tuḥaf, rev. by Hamīd Allah, Kuwait (1959), p. 211.
- (37) Bierman, Irene, Art and Politics, the Impact of Fāṭimid Uses of Tīrāz Fabrics, Ph.D. thesis (not published), Chicago (1980), p. 6. (1977), pp. 141-142.
- (38) Mascūdī, *op. cit.*, p. 446.
- (39) al-ʿIṣfahānī, Vol. 12, p. 81.
- (40) Ettinghausen, *op. cit.*, p. 38.
Almagro, *op. cit.*, p. 3.vii
- (41) Rosse, Heather Colyer, The Art of Arabian Costume, Friburg, (1981), p. 61.
- (42) The Holy Qurʾān, Ahzāb, 33:31.
- (43) "Kha-ma-ra", Lisān al-ʿArab.
"takhmīr", de medee, laisser tremper des substances.
Dozy, Sup. Aux. Dict., p. 404.
- (44) Lisān al-ʿArab, "Khimār"
Lane's Lexicon, "jilbāb", Vol. 1, p. 428.
- (45) *op. cit.*, "burquʿ", p. 45.
- (46) *ibid*
- (47) *ibid*
- (48) *ibid*

- (49) "Sabb" and "suhūb" are fine clothes of the "khimār", Mahir, S., opp. cit., p. 94.
Serjeant, opp. cit., p. 64, cotton of Aramenian fabric.
Also, "sabb" as a flax fabric mentioned in Jāhiliyya poems of 'Abdallah al-Azdi .
- (50) "Takhamur" is sealine the grape juice and making wine. The wine called "khamra" because it conceals the head from reason.
Zamakhsharf, al-Kashāf, "Zamakhsharf's Commentary on the Qur'ān", Cairo, (1343/1925), 2 vols., Vol. 1, p.
- (51) Lane's Lexicon, Vol. 1, p. 809.
- (52) Dozy, Sup. Aux. Dict., Vol. 1, p. 404.
Takmilat al-Ṣila, transl. by Salim al-Nu'aimi, Baghdad, "Footnote", Vol. 1, p. 150.
- (53) Taj al-ʿArūs, "khimār".
- (54) *ibid*, Ṣaḥīḥ al-Lughā and al-Jawāharī, "khimār".
- (55) Dozy, Supp aux Dict., p. 170, "khimār". "... un voile de femme qui cache le devant du menton et cela de la bouche."
- (56) According to Levy, Baiḍāwī speaks with little authority on this matter.
See Social Structure of Islam, Cambridge (1957), p. 124
and Baiḍāwī, Abd Allah Ibn ʿUmar.
Anwār al-Tanzīl "Commentary on the Qur'ām" entitled Tafsīr al-Jalālāin, 2 vols., Cairo (1902), Tafsīr Sūrat al-Nūr.
- (57) Qāmūs al-Muḥīṭ, "khimār".
al-Jabūrī, "al-Malābis", Bulletin, Fac. of Human and Social Sciences, University of Qatar, Doha (1985), Vol. 8, p. 279.
- (58) Dīwān al-ʿAḡshā, commentary M. Husain, Beirut (1983), p. 101.
- (59) Dīwān Turfa' Ibn al-ʿAbd, transl. by Max Seligsohn, Paris (1901), p. 72.
- (60) Lyall, Muffaddaliyāt, Vol. 2, p. 49.

- (61) The poet, al-Ḥārith al-Makhzūmī. See al-Jabūrī, op . cit., p. 281.
- (62) 'Umar 'Ibn 'Abī Rabi'ā describes the tiredness of his beloved in her circumambulation of the Ka'ba. She was so tired that she threw off her "khimār". Diwān 'Ibn 'Abī Rabi'ā, rev. by M. al-'Anānī, Sa'ad Press, Cairo (no date), p. 140. Diwān al-Khansā', known as 'Anīs al-Julasā'', "Introduction", rev. by Lois Sheikho, Beirut (1895).
- (63) al-Shi'r wa al-Shu'ra', Rieden, p. 200, see al-Jabūrī, op . cit., p. 280.
- (64) Diwān 'Umar 'Ibn Abī Rabi'ā op . cit.
- (65) Tafsīr al-Jalālīn, op . cit., Nur.
- (66) Reuben, Jewish Costume, p. 3.
- (67) Old Testament, Genesis, 24:65.
- (68) Levy, The Social Structure, p. 124.
 'Ibn Qudāma, Mughnī Vol. 1, p. 604.
 'Ibn Hazam, al-Muḥalā, Vol. 3, p. 221
- (69) "Khadija disclosed her form and cast aside her "khimār" (veil), Ibn 'Ishāq, Sīrat Rusūl Allāh, transl. by Guillaume, The Life of Muhammad, Oxford (1982), 7th ed., p. 107.
- (70) 7. "for man indeed ought not to cover his head for as much as he is the image and glory of God, but the women in the glory of the man ...", St. Paul, Corinthians II (c. 50 AD), verse 8, 9.
10. "For this cause ought the woman to have cover her head because of the Angels."
- (71) Sunnan Abū Dawūd, Vol. 1, p. 149.
- (72) Kitāb al-Āmthāl, p. 108, mentioned by al-Jabūrī, op . cit., p. 279
 'Afīfī, al-Marā', Vol. 1, p. 119.
- (73) 'Ibn Qudāma, op . cit.
- (74) al-'Isfahānī, Kitāb al-Aghānī, Vol. 14, p.
 'Afīfī, Abd Allāh, Al-Marā' al-'Arabīa "The Arab Woman", 2 vols., Cairo (1945), Vol. 2, p. 45.

- (75) Qurṭubī, Aḥkām al-Qur'an, Vol. 2, p. 114.
- (76) 'Afīfī, op . cit., Vol. 2, p.
- (77) al-Isfahānī, Vol. 3, pp. 45-46.
- (78) Ibn Sa'd, op . cit., Vol. 8, p. 463.
- (79) The Holy Qur'an, Nūr, 24:31.
- (80) Hamilton, Khirbat al-Mafjar, An Arabian Mansion in the Jordanian Valley, Oxford (1059), PLXCVIII.
- (81) al-Mascūdī, Murūj al-Dhahab, Vol. 3, p. 184.
- (82) "Idhrīj" is the yellow khazz. See al-Mukhassas, Vol. 4, p. 68.
- (83) Hishām Ibn 'Abdal-Malik (105-125/723-742).
al-Jahīzī, al-Tabasur bi al-Tijara, p. 16.
- (84) Ibn Salām, al-Gharīb al-Muṣanaf, manuscript no. 1628, Iraqi Museum Library, p. 16.
- (85) The flag and the crescent on this tent symbolise the caliph's property.
Almagro and others, Qusayr 'Amra, op . cit.
- (86) Zamakhsharī, al-Kashāf, Nūr, 24:31.
- (87) Madhloom, Assyrian Art, p. 73, refer Botta 192.
- (88) Pritchard, J., The Ancient Near-East in Pictures, relating to the Old Testament, Princeton University Press (1954), p. 38, fig. 125. A woman holding stoff Magido ivory.
al-Muzaiyan, Abdalrahman, al-Azīf' al-Shabi'; Palestinian Traditional Costumes, p. 75.
- (89) Ettinghausen, Arab Painting, pp.
Maqama no. 32
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- Gastwood, G., "A Medieval Face Veil from Egypt", Costume, No. 17 (1983), pp. 33-38.
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- (90) Ibn Khaldūn has distinguished several sorts of ḥijāb; ḥijāba first began when nomadism was abandoned and the sovereign gave up primitive customs with the development of the state. Ibn Khaldūn, Muqaddimah, an Introduction to History, transl. by F. Rosenthal, 3 vols., New York (1958), Vol. II, pp. 111-13.

- (91) The Holy Qur'ān, Aḥzāb, 33:53.
- (92) *op. cit.*, XLI:5.
- (93) *op. cit.*, Isra', 17:45, "hifaban mastura".
- (94) al-Zamakhsharf, *op. cit.*, "al-Isra'" Sura.
- (95) *ibid*
- (96) "Aṣṭār" (pl. of "sitāra") from the derivation "sa-ta-ra", are garments and curtains (coverings) agreed upon by most Arab lexicographers. See Ṭāj al-ʿArūs, and Lisān al-ʿArab, vol. IV, p. 243.
- (97) The Holy Qur'ān, al-Kahaf, 17:90:
 "Until when he came to the rising of the sun, he found it rising on people for whom we had provided no "sitāra" (covering, protection) against the sun."
- (98) Wherr, H., Arabic-English Dictionary, p. 397.
Huges, Dictionary of Islam: "Ḥijāb", p. 174.
- (99) Lisān al-ʿArab, "sitṛā", "silāḥ".
- (100) al-Azraqī, Tārīkh Makka, and other sources relevant to Makka and the Ka'ba.
- (101) Serjeant cites according to the Qalqashandī in Ṣubḥ al-ʿAshā, Vol. II, p. 128, that "kiswa" is "mizall" or "ṣatrr" or umbrella. See Serjeant, *op. cit.*, p. 27.
- (102) al-Jādīd, Al-Hiraḥ wal-Sinācāt, The Assyrian Hand Crafts, Baghdad (1972), p. 272.
- (103) Wollleston, N. Arther, A Complete English-Persian Dictionary, London (1889), see "veil".
- (104) Levy, *op. cit.*, p. 124.
- (105) ʿIbn Kathīr, *op. cit.*, Vol. 2, p. 618.
- (106) 'Asmā' was the wife of an Anṣārī man of Madīna, in the early days of Hījra. See *ibid*.
- (107) Muir, Life of Muhammet, London (1894), p. 117.
- (108) "ʿadam" is a fine leather used to cover the Ka'ba with. See Salīm, *op. cit.*, p.

- (122) Colledge, The Art of Palmyra, "dorsale", "dorsalium", pp. 157, pl. 74, 117.
Also symbolic but ornamental, see *ibid*, note no. 615.
- (123) The Holy Qur'an, Maryam (Mary), 19:17:
16- Relate in the book (the story of) Mary when she withdrew from her family to a place in the East .

17- She placed "hijāban" (a screen) (to screen) herself from them; then We sent her Our Angel and he appeared before her as a man in all respects.
- (124) Seibert, Ilse, Women in Ancient Near-East, ed. Liepzig (1974).
- (125) Scarce, J., The Development of Women's Veils in Persia and Afghanistan, Costume (1975), Vol. 9, pp. 4-14.
Pope, Survey, Naqsi-Rustan, Vol. VII, p. 155A.
- (126) Sykes, History of Persia, 2 vols., London (1930), Vol. 1, p. 72.
- (127) The Holy Qur'an, Ahzāb, 32:33. — " وَقَرْنَا فِي مَبْنِيٍّ " —
op cit. 32:53 — " أَسْأَلُوهُمْ مِنْ وِرَادِ حِجَابٍ " —

- (109) Hitti, P., History of Arabs, p. 305.
Al-Mawdu'iy, opp. cit., Vol. 4, pp. 252-5.
- (110) Ibn Kathir, op. cit., p. 618.
- (111) al-M^{mauwlūdi} Purdah, see the introduction.
- (112) al-Jahiz, Le Livre de Couronne, trans. Pallet (no date), p. 59.
- (113) The "sitāra" is the "wizra", a term used after he decorated
- lower part of the walls in traditional buildings. This
- term derived from the "izār" which covers the lower part
of the body. See al-Rusafi, Dictionary of Traditional
Crafts [Arabic], Baghdad (19).
- (114) Ettinghausen, op. cit., pp. 9-41.
Hassan, Zakī, The Atlas, p. 501.
- (115) al-Tabari, op. cit., p. 1520.
- (116) Mahir, S., Mashhad 'Imām 'Alī, Tombe of Alī at the Najaf, Cairo
(1388 H.), p. 27.
- (117) 'Affī, Arab Women [Arabic], 2 vols., Cairo (1945), Vol. , p.
- (118) ibid — "يوم صاحوراً: أنا من ذوات الخدود وبنات الستور"
- (119) The ladies' litters, shrouded with embroidered linen cloths
, and sheaths as protection from birds. The poet 'Ubayd
'Ibn al- Abruṣ described the beautiful "Huwayrs":
- over their litters are drawn embroidered cloths and
carpets.
- and linen veils pricked out with choicest needlework.
- a glow of colour in the morning, most wonderful to
behold.
- as though "Abqari", the canopies, were all stained with
circles of blood.

See Diwān 'Ibn al- Abruṣ, trans. by Sir Charles Lyall,
Leiden, Brill (1913), p. 48.
- (120) Serjeant, op. cit., p. 131.
- (121) The Holy Qur'ān, al-Rahmān (the God), 55:76.
Reclining on green cushions and rich ṣabqari' (carpets)
of beauty.
ṣabqari': carpets elaborately figured and dyed and
skillfully worked, see Alī, The Holy Qur'ān, p. 1482.

C O N C L U S I O N

This thesis has examined the theory that there were two concepts embodied in the word ḥijāb: "clothing" and "seclusion of women." Clothing, in turn, was subdivided into two categories: the jilbāb, an outer covering or garments such as cloaks, mantles, etc., and the khimār, consisting of head coverings such as veils, scarfs, etc. As for seclusion, the ḥijāb is classified under sitāra, which literally means ḥarīm. Both clothing and seclusion are often used interchangeably. Examining the Qur'anic definition of ḥijab reveals that these were specifically applied to the Prophet's wives in the fifth year of Hijra (AD 627), while Muslim women were merely advised to dress respectably in jilbābs and khimārs.

The earliest historical record of the ḥijāb comes in the Old Testament in the 19th century BC, alongside various artistic representations of wrappers, mantles and headgear of the pre-Islamic times. Hijāb became compulsory under Assyrian law in the 7th century BC, with the Babylonians being the founders of female seclusion, whereby virgins were kept in their temples. The Persians similarly practiced anderun, wherein women were segregated and secluded in private quarters and palaces from the 5th century BC onwards.

This study has shown that although the Arabs had worn various styles of hijāb clothing, they originally did in fact not practice seclusion in any form. Numerous descriptions of hijāb in Jāhiliyya poetry (6th century AD) showed that it was introduced into Islam through Jāhiliyya customs and traditions, such as the khimār of Khadija, the Prophet's first wife, who died shortly before the Hijra in AD 619.

Earlier indications show that the first Muslims revived some of these Jāhiliyya traditions of hijab and practiced them in the Rashidun times. This was particularly evident in the strict actions of the Caliph Umar (13-23/634-44) which were to be applied to the Prophet's wives only.

Archeological evidence and historical records reveal that the Umayyads ruling Roman Syria with their powerful tribal Arab traditions, were greatly influenced by local arts, thereby introducing a new style of hijāb. This involved wearing various turbans, perfumed clothes and embroidered veils, alongside which ḥarīms were kept, as copiously illustrated in the Umayyad palaces of Qusayr Amra and Khirbat al-Mafjar. This is why the Hadiths written at the end of the Umayyad period, show strict language and imposed hijāb on ordinary Muslim women as well.

Both clothing categories of hijāb - jilbābs and khimars - had several definitions. With respect to seclusion, hijāb is defined as sitāra (curtain) and ḥarīm in this study.

Pre-Islamic art demonstrates a variety of fringed, patterned, plain, bordered cloaks, mantles and wrappers. The polos of the "Worshipper Queen" from Mari, Tel al-Hariri (3rd millenium BC) is considered the earliest form of jilbāb.

As for the Arabs, the fringed cloak of the "Bedouin Queen" Samsi or Zabibi (8th century BC Assyrian art), the three fully veiled Arab women (Baḡl temple, AD 32, Palmyra) and other Palmyran and Hatran representations of veiled women, are the most important archaeological evidence of the hijāb in pre-Islamic times.

While the historically earliest jilbāb after the introduction of Islam is the one used by 'Aisha (mentioned in the 'ifk incident of 5/627), the paintings of Qusayr 'Amra also depict numerous jilbābs worn by 'Umayyad court ladies of that time. Following that, their existence is scarcely mentioned in earlier historical records. Nowadays the jilbāb is still used in North Africa, otherwise known as the qillāba, the 'abāya and daffa in Saudi Arabia and the Gulf and the chādūr in Iran and Afghanistan.

As for the khimār, this is very rarely represented in pre-Islamic art. Only the "prayer figures" of Larsa and the "ivory panel" from Magido (2nd millenium BC) can perhaps be considered the earliest representations. With the disappearance of the khimār from the arts of Assyria, Palmyra, Dura-Europos and Hatra,

Jahiliyya poetry, like Umayyad art, gave vivid descriptions of it in Arabia. It seems that khimars also became the traditional veil used among the bedouins, attendants, maids and servants at court after the Umayyad period. Today, the khimar known as the hijāb, shayla, burqu, niqāb, etc., is found all over the Muslim world.

This thesis has succeeded in identifying the purpose of sitūr as being ritualistic (seen in coverings and curtains of the Ka'ba) and symbolising honour and wealth, stressing, however, that it did not denote seclusion of women (as seen in harīms in Jahiliyya days of Arabia). Examining sitāra in Qusayr 'Amra, shows that they were used to partition off the women's quarters at the Umayyad court, lasting to the present day in the annual tradition of kiswat al-Ka'ba. It is also still widely used inside some Arabian palaces of Syria and North Africa. The chādūr of Iran, a variation of the Arabic sitūr or sitir, most probably emerged there at the time of the Muslim conquest in the 7th century AD. In Afghanistan and Muslim India it known as the purda.

Henceforth, seclusion and clothing and all their variations, were merged to be collectively termed as hijāb, introduced to Islam through Arabia.

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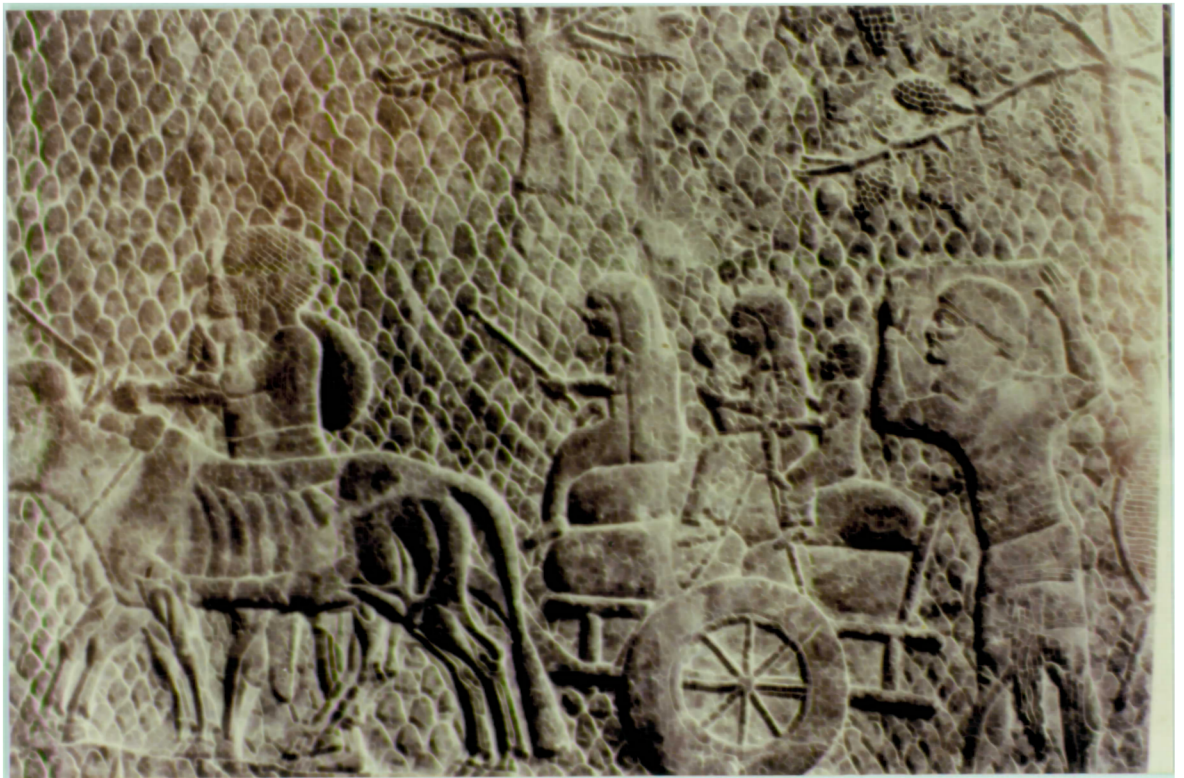
Pl. I Sumerian woman carrying a child; terra cotta figurine from Larsa (3rd mill. BC)
Paris, Louvre



Pl. II "The Worshipper Queen" - gypsum statue found in the Ashtar Temple, Mari, Tel al-Hariri (3rd mill. BC).
Damascus, National Museum
Height 26.2 cm



PL. III Babylonian kaunakes and conical twisted head-dress;
relief from Mari, Tel al-Hariri (1800 BC- ancient
Babylonian period).
Paris, Louvre



Pl. IV Prisoners, probably of Syrian or Jewish origin, being
driven away; stone relief from the South-West Palace of
Sennacherib, Nineveh (c. 700 BC).
London, British Museum



Pl. V

"The Captive Woman" and an Assyrian soldier; wall Painting from the royal palace, Barsib, Tel-Ahmar, in situ.

[source: Dangin and Dunnand, Til Barsib avec Tell-Ahmar, Birdiik, Paris (1931), Pl. XXIV]



Pl. VI

- a) Ashur Banipal with his queen , Ashur Sharat, in the vine arbour. Alabaster relief from the North Palace of Ashur Banipal, Nineveh (668-630 BC). London, British Museum, No. 124920 Width 139 cm
- b) Detail of Queen Ashur Sharat from the same relief.



Pl. VII "Queen of Hatra" - Abu, daughter of Dimiyon, wife of the Arab king Sanatruq; stone statue (mid 1st Century AD). Iraq, Hatra



Pl. VIII Princess Lawshwari, daughter of the Arab king Sanatruq; stone statue from Hatra (138 AD). Baghdad, Iraqi Museum, No. 56752

Pl. IX Ubal, daughter of Jabal; stone
statue from Hatra (1st Century
AD).
Baghdad, Iraqi Museum



Pl. X A "Spinner Queen" depicted in an embroidered thin
garment and a carefully arranged hairstyle; stone bas-
relief attributed to the Elamite period (13th Century
BC).
Paris, Louvre
Size 10 x 13 cm
[source: J. M. de Morgan, Memoires de la Délégation en
Perse, Paris (1900), Vol. I, Pl. XI]





Pl. XI

A cortege of Achaemenid court ladies accompanying the deceased king to his grave. Stone bas-relief, Greco-Persian (early 5th Century BC).
Istanbul, Archaeological Museum, No. 2348
Size 124 x 218 cm



p1 Pl. XII

A prince being served by his wife and servants; Funerary Stele from Susa (c. 600 BC).
Paris, Louvre
[source: Seibert, Women in the Ancient Near East, Leipzig (1976), Pl. 61]



Pl. XIII Part of the wedding scene of Peleus and Thetis on a fragment of a painted vase from Greece (6th Century BC). Athens, National Museum, No. 15165



Pl. XIV Preparations for a meal, represented on a painted wooden panel from the area of Cicyon (6th Century BC). Athens, National Museum, No. 16464



Pl. XV "A Religious Procession" - stone relief from the Ba'al Temple, Palmyra (c. 82 AD).
Palmyra
Height c. 2m



Pl. XVI Detail of the same relief representing three completely veiled Arab women attending the procession.
Palmyra, Ba'al Temple



Pl. XVII Gravestone of a woman from Palmyra (1st Century BC).
Paris, Louvre, No. 5971
Height 28 cm



Pl. XVIII Funerary relief bust of the richly dressed Tanna; Palmyra
(c. 150 AD)
London, British Museum, No. 125204
Height 49 cm



Pl. XIX

Funerary Stele of Ra'ateh standing behind a curtain;
Palmyra (early or mid 2nd Century BC).
Copenhagen, Ny Carlsberg Glyptotek, No. 1030
Height 37 cm



Pl. XX

A woman playing her lyre among attendants. The inscription identifies her as Ghalilar, daughter of Mufidat. From a Sabaeen relief slab (1st Century BC - 1st Century AD).
London, British Museum, No. 125204



Pl. XXI Worshipping Palmyran women - women offering carriers as
part of a worshipping rite. (1st half of the 1st Century
AD).
Palmyra, Museum
Height 42 cm



I Pl. XXII "Divine Image" - stone relief from Dura-Europos (159
AD).
Damascus, National Museum
Height 70 cm



Pl. XXIII

A woman holding the sides of her veil together;
representation on a funerary relief from Palmyra
(late 2nd Century AD).
Paris, Louvre, No. 21383
Height 40 cm



Pl. XXIV

Aha, daughter of Zabdalah, represented with a distinctive
hair-style, throwing her veil over the shoulder; stone
relief from Palmyra (149 AD).
Copenhagen, Ny Carlsberg Glyptotek, No. 2794
Height c. 50 cm



Pl. XXV

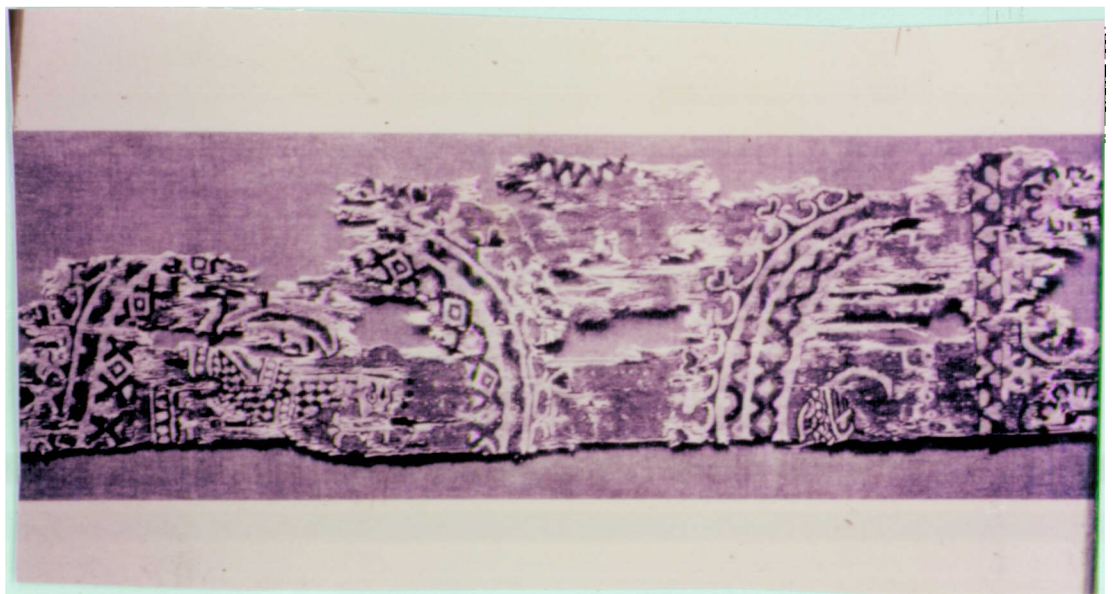
Brocaded woollen cover in plain weave, similar to Senne kilims, with geometric representations of camels, a dog and a scorpion found on Caucasian rugs. Sumac, Caspian region, (mid 19th Century).

Size 188 x 196 cm

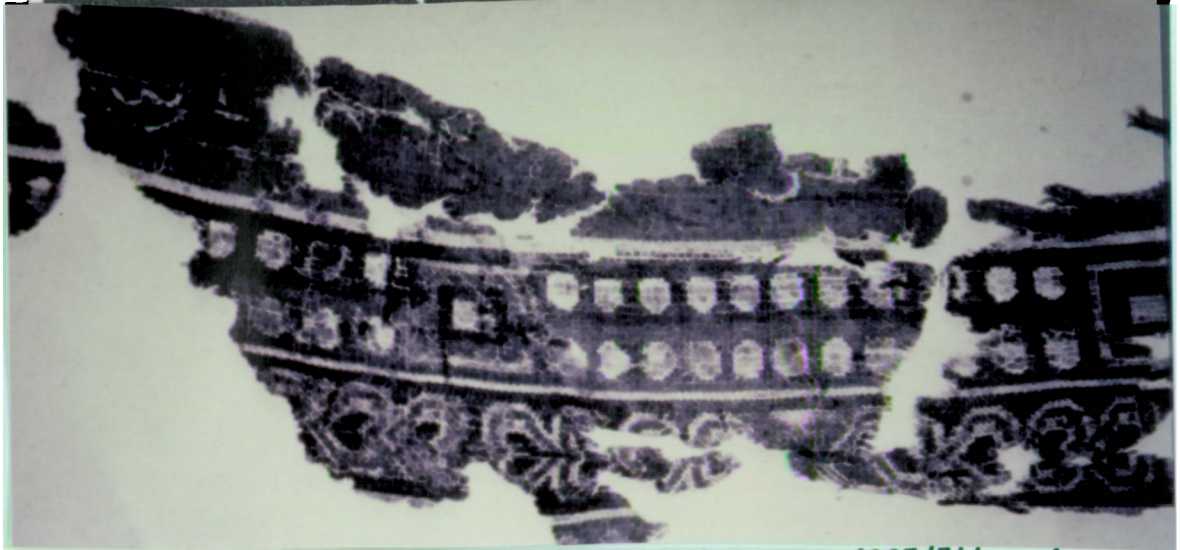
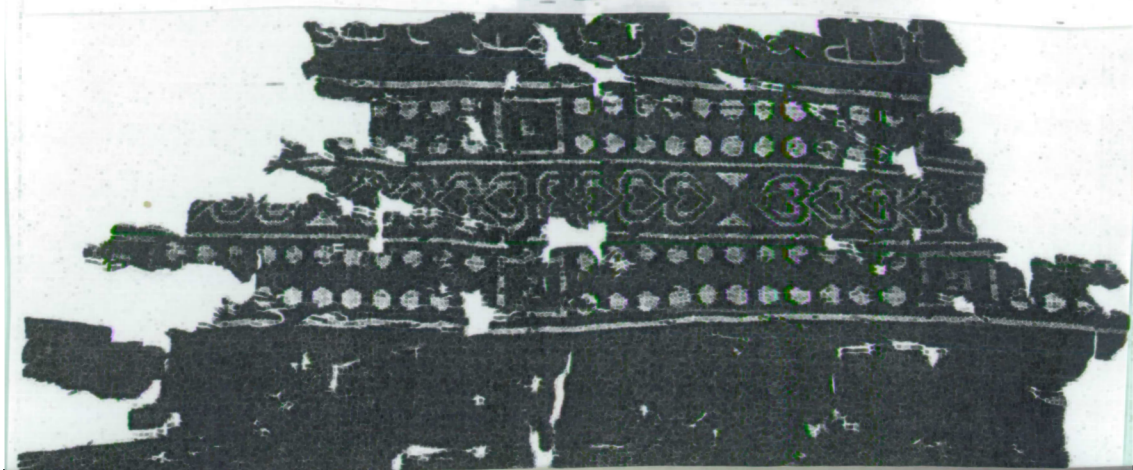
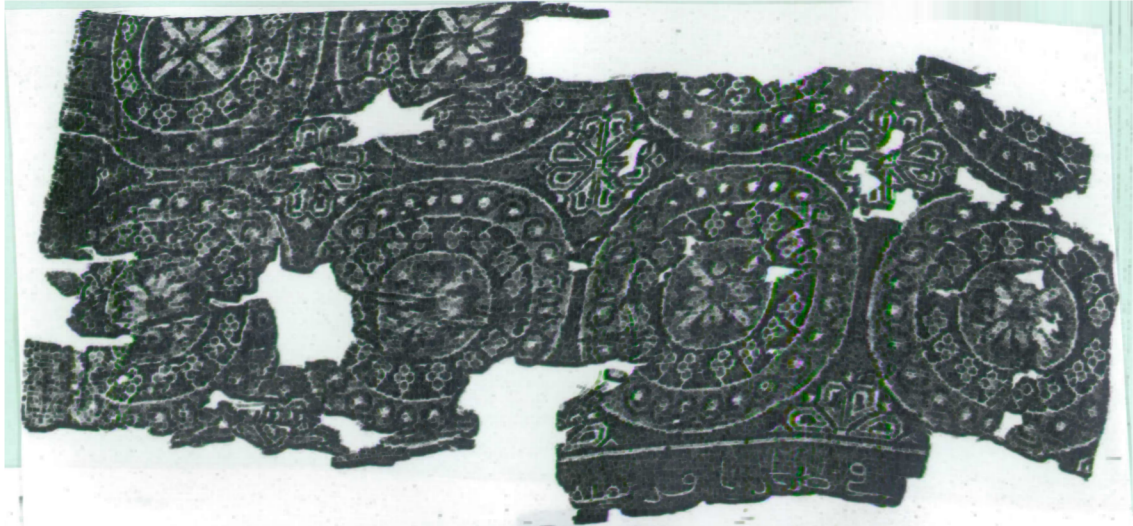
[source: Bamrough, Antique Oriental Rugs and Carpets, London (1979), Pl. 141]



Pl. XXVI Busts of a deceased man and a mourning woman; the woman, following an old Semetic mourning rite, is shown with dishevelled hair, arms and torso bared and breasts and shoulders scarred. Funerary relief from Palmyra (c. 150 AD).
Beirut, American University Museum, No. 3312
Height 43 cm



Pl. XXVII Fragment of a woollen tapestry; tirāz of Marwān II (127/744 - 132/750), Persia or Mesopotamia.
Washington DC, Textile Museum
Size 1.18 x 5 cm



P Pl. XXVIII Three embroidered tirāz fragments made of red silk, dated to the period of Marwān II (127/744 - 132/750):

- a) Fragment of red silk, with Arabic inscription in yellow silk readings: "I 'Abdallāh 'Amīr al-Mu'īnīn".

London, Victoria and Albert Museum

Size 21 x 50.5 cm

- b) Fragment of red silk with Arabic inscription reading: "Amara bī 'Analihi fī Rajab".

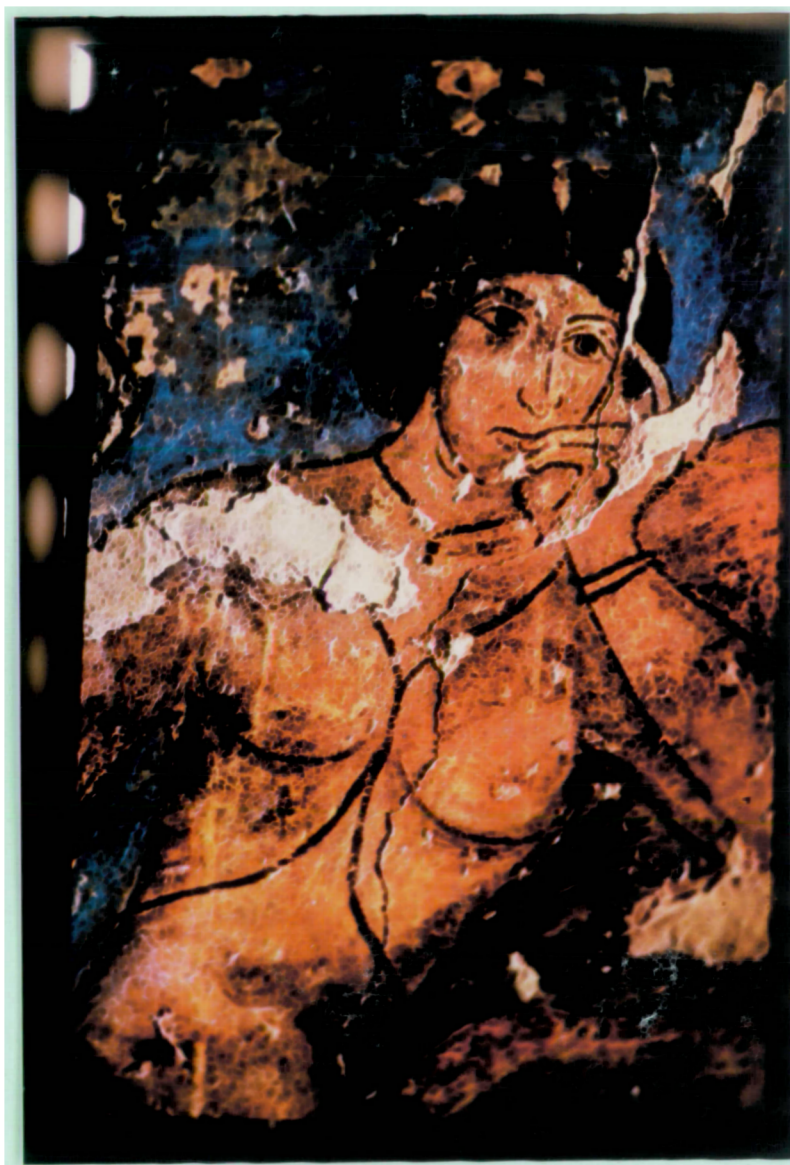
The Brooklyn Museum of Art, New York

Size 15 x 35 cm

- c) Fragment of red silk with Arabic inscription reading: "Fī Tirāz Ifriqiya".

Manchester, Whitworth Art Gallery

Size 8 x 53 cm



Pl. XXIX Female wearing a large turban; detail of a wall painting showing the Victory on the north-west spandrel of the Central Hall, Qusayr 'Amra, Jordan (early 8th Century AD)



a)



b)

Pl. XXX

- a) Statue of a woman wearing a turban; Khirbat al-Mafjar, Jordan, period of Hishām's reign (724-743 AD).
Jerusalem, Archaeological Museum
[source: Hamilton, Khirbat al-Mafjar, Oxford (1959), pl. LVI]
- b) Bust of a richly jewelled woman; Palmyra (3rd Century AD).
Copenhagen, Ny Carlsberg Glyptotek, No. 2793
Height 55 cm



a



b

Pl. XXXI

- a) "Spinning Woman" - relief on an Aramaeic basalt stele from a grave at Marash (8th Century BC).
Turkey, Adana Museum
Height 105 cm
- b) A mother with her son - relief on an Aramaeic basalt stele from Marash (8th Century BC).
Paris, Louvre
Height 80 cm



Pl. XXXII Worship scene on a gold pendant from Toprak-Kale, Turkey
(Assyrian period, 8-7th Century BC).
Berlin, Staatliche Museen, No. 4634
Diameter 4.6 cm



- Pl. XXXIII a) Figure of a woman (representing a Bacante); wall painting under the arch of the Throne Hall, Qusayr 'Amra, Jordan (early 8th Century AD).
[source: Almagro et.al., Qusayr 'Amra, Madrid (1975), Pl. IXa]
- b) Figure of a woman representing Fortuna; wall painting under the arch of the Throne Hall, Qusayr 'Amra, Jordan (early 8th Century AD).
[source: ibid., Pl. IXb]



Pl. XXXIV Figure of a seated female musician playing the 'ud (lute);
wall painting on the western arch of the Great Hall, Qasr 'Amra, Jordan (early 8th Century AD).
[source: ibid., Pl. XXVII]



Pl. XXXV

Musician and Hunting Scene - floor painting from Qaṣr al-
Ḥayr al-Bharbī, Syria (8th Century AD).
Damascus, National Museum



Pl.XXXVI "The Servant" - detail from the "Bath Scene" wall painting representing a female servant or maid helping her mistress in the bath; Qusayr 'Amra, Jordan (early 8th Century AD). [source: Almagro et. al., op. cit., Pl. XIX]



Pl. XXXVII Detail of three 'Umayyad court ladies; painting decorating the Central Hall of Qusayr 'Amra, Jordan (early 8th Century AD).
[source: ibid., Pl. VIII]



Pl. XXXVIII Woman's black wool cloak, with silver embroidered collar and bound silver edges.
Doha, Qatar National Museum, No. 5045



Pl. XXXIX Hunting Scene - wall painting from Qusayr 'Amra, Jordan
(early 8th century AD).
[source: Almagro et. al., op.cit., Pl. XXIV]



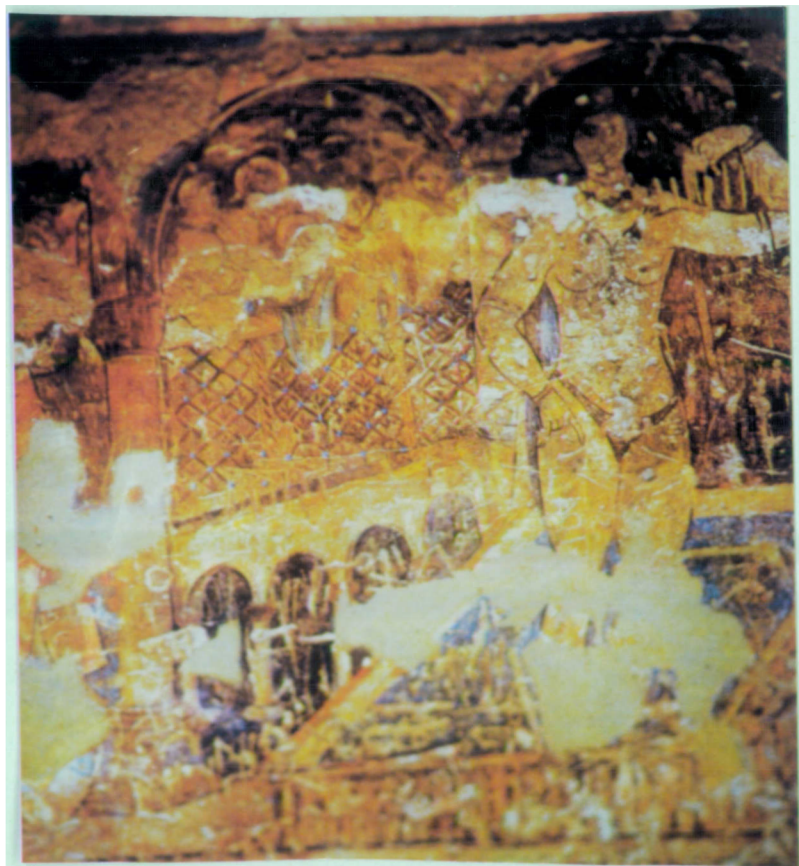
Pl. XL

An unidentified figure looking from behind a curtain;
detail of a wall painting in Qusayr 'Amra, Jordan (early
8th century AD).
[source: ibid., Pl. XX]



Pl. XLI

The prince's wife or beloved; detail from the "Bath Scene" in Qusayr 'Amra, Jordan (early 8th Century AD).
[source: ibid., Pl. XIX]



Pl. XLII

The "Bath Scene"; wall painting in Qusayr 'Amra, Jordan (early 8th Century AD).
[source: ibid., Pl. XIX]



Pl. XLIII Moses being rescued from the water by the Pharaoh's daughter; wall painting from Dura-Europos (c. 250 AD).
Damascus, National Museum



Pl. XLIV Camels carrying goods and covered with richly decorated rugs; wall painting decorating the arch in the Women's Quarter, Qusayr 'Amra, Jordan (early 8th Century AD).
[source: Almagro, et. al., op.cit., PL. XXVIII. 1